Joint Working Group
between the
Roman Catholic Church
and the
World Council of Churches

Walking, Praying, and Working Together: An Ecumenical Pilgrimage

Tenth Report
2014–2022

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Foreword by the Co-Moderators

Both of us had the privilege of serving together as co-moderators of the Joint Working Group (JWG) between the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) for two mandates, i.e., from 2007 to 2012 and from 2014 to 2021. We are grateful to both the WCC and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU), the two parent bodies of the JWG, for their commitment to fostering Christian unity through the work of this precious instrument of collaboration and for their trust in us. We want to thank especially Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the PCPCU, and the Most Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, WCC general secretary from 2010 to 2020, as well as the Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca, WCC acting general secretary from 2020, for their accompaniment and support.

"Receiving one another in the name of Christ" was the motto chosen for the Ninth Report of the JWG that was published in 2013. The quality of relationship that we nurture together through the work of the group is decisive for the results we achieve and the progress toward the Christian unity we desire. In the second mandate, we could build together on the friendship and mutual appreciation of knowledge, wisdom, and leadership of each other that had grown during our first mandate. We were now "walking, praying, and working together," continuing our common journey on our way toward the shared goal of the visible unity of the Church to the glory of God Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and in the service of peace and justice for the human family and all creation.

The evaluation of our experiences and learning during the first mandate had led us to change the size and composition of the group. It became a smaller and more efficient body with much closer links to different Dicasteries and departments of the Holy See and the ongoing programmatic work of

the WCC. This Tenth Report demonstrates a much more developed cooperation in all areas of work.

The title of this report—*Walking, Praying and Working Together: An Ecumenical Pilgrimage*—was the motto of Pope Francis' visit to Geneva in June 2018, surely the outstanding highlight of ecumenical cooperation between the WCC and the RCC during this mandate of the JWG. It captured well the WCC's emphasis on a pilgrimage of justice and peace following the 10th Assembly in Busan in 2013 and Pope Francis' conviction that unity can only grow in the walking of Christians together as fellow pilgrims in Christ's love.

"Christ's Love Moves the World to Reconciliation and Unity" is the theme of the forthcoming 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe in 2022. We offer this report to the assembly as well as two study documents—*Peace Is a Treasure for All: An Ecumenical Reflection on Peacebuilding in Situations of Conflict and Violence* and *Migrants and Refugees: Ecumenical Challenges and Opportunities*—with recommendations for the parent bodies. The study documents address two critical areas of ecumenical cooperation in today's world. Together, they encourage intensive ecumenical cooperation of all Christians and people of goodwill, with a special emphasis on the contributions that can be made by the WCC and the RCC together. We hope that the report and the documents will be well received by the parent bodies and contribute to strengthen their cooperation into the future.

Archbishop Diarmuid Martin
Archbishop Emeritus of Dublin, Ireland

Metropolitan Nifon
Archbishop of Târgoviște, Romania

I. Introduction

A. An ecumenical pilgrimage

This is a time of pilgrimage for both the RCC and the WCC. By walking, praying, and working together, fellowship can be deepened on the way. The togetherness that grows on this journey moves beyond the common action the Lund Principle of 1952 is calling for.[1] It goes even further than receptive ecumenism, receiving the gifts that can be shared with each other. It means working together for justice and peace, and addressing divisive factors in mutual accountability for the good of all Christian sisters and brothers and, indeed, this world, which is moved by Christ's love to reconciliation and unity.

The visible unity of the Church remains the goal of the ecumenical endeavour. It is to be explored in doctrinal reflections and dialogues, anticipated in joint action, and experienced through participation in common prayer and the spiritual life of each other in helpful and appropriate ways. An important and vital step forward during this mandate was the response of the RCC to the Faith and Order consensus document *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (*TCTCV*). The PCPCU had shared the document widely and asked bishops' conferences and scholars for their assessment in a broad process of its reception. In this way, the response became a helpful commentary on the original document, taking stock of the progress made so far, highlighting open

1. The Lund Principle states that churches should act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately. It was first affirmed during the third World Conference on Faith and Order held in Lund, Sweden, in 1952.

questions, and pointing to critical tasks to be further explored in future multilateral and bilateral dialogues. Another important document prepared and published by the PCPCU in 2020 was *The Bishop and Christian Unity: An Ecumenical Vademecum,* which was received with gratitude not only within the Roman Catholic community but also by other churches.

The ninth report of the JWG offered study documents on reception and the spiritual roots of ecumenism that aimed to foster more reflective and deeper togetherness on the way. When the JWG plenary decided to focus in this mandate on the themes "peacebuilding in situations of conflict and violence" and "migrants and refugees: ecumenical challenges and opportunities," the assumption was that joint action addressing important contemporary challenges of the world had to be encouraged and nurtured. Cooperation on theological dialogue through Faith and Order with representatives of PCPCU as members of the commission, on mission through the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), and on interreligious dialogue and cooperation through both the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) and the WCC office of Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation had very well developed in recent years and shown important fruits. Since the demise of the joint Committee on Society, Development, and Peace (SODEPAX) (1968-1980), however, it had been impossible to reach a similar level of cooperation on issues of justice, peace, and the care for creation.

This changed significantly during this mandate. Surely, the new composition of the JWG membership was an important step forward and facilitated direct cooperation first with the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People (PCPCMIP) and later the newly formed Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development (DPIHD). The decisive change, however, came with the pontificate of Pope Francis. His apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* and the encyclicals *Laudato si'* and *Fratelli tutti* paved the way for growing cooperation on justice and peace between the DPIHD and the WCC programme on *Diakonia and Ecumenical Solidarity*, and between the WCC's Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) and the Holy See's Secretariat of State in conflict areas such as Iraq and Syria, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and others. There can be no visible unity of the Church that ignores the unity of humankind and all creation.

The pilgrimage approach of walking, praying, and working together has inspired the JWG during this mandate, encouraging the PCPCU and

the WCC, the two parent bodies, to make the common search for unity concretely visible through their common journey. Moving forward in this way, the JWG has understood that being together on the way in prayer and praxis is a necessary condition for moving closer to the goal of visible unity. Churches together receiving and accompanying migrants and refugees, or churches together working for peace are not just provisional measures for the interim, the time toward the final goal; rather, searching for specific ways of cooperation on vital concerns contributes to increasing mutual understanding and a shared vision of faith.

During the last period of this mandate, the JWG held its meetings via Zoom due to the difficult circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected the lives of millions of people. As the crisis deepened, the parent bodies shared their ways of adapting and of finding solutions to counteract disillusionment, fear, and instability. Churches contributed immensely to curbing the spread of COVID-19 not only by promoting solidarity, accountability, wisdom, care, and fact-based policies but also by providing support to schools and hospitals, and pastoral care to those suffering from COVID-19 and its consequences, those at risk of contracting the virus, and those who lost their dearest family members or friends. Not least, churches brought healing, spiritual nourishment, and comfort to the homes of people by streaming common prayer online, sustaining thereby the spirit of community and belonging.

The present crisis presents a degree of complexity that makes it vital to strengthen our relationship even more and to intensify the affirmation of Christian values. The challenges generated by the pandemic require a reinforcing of a culture of compassion and solidarity as well as the promotion of solidarity between human beings. A concrete example of fruitful collaboration between the two parent bodies is the joint publication *Serving a Wounded World in Interreligious Solidarity: A Christian Call to Reflection and Action During COVID-19 and Beyond*. This document sheds light on values such as service, hope, care, and love, reaffirming the co-responsibility and interconnectedness of human beings "as a family linked by the one Creator, and created in God's image."[2]

2. Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and World Council of Churches, Serving a Wounded World in Interreligious Solidarity: A Christian Call to Reflection and Action During COVID-19 and Beyond (Vatican City: PCID; Geneva: WCC Publications, 2020), 11, https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/publications/serving-a-wounded-world-in-interreligious-solidarity.

As the times ahead are likely to be unprecedented in the number of global shifts that the world might experience, the two parent bodies move forward with faithfulness in a spirit of shared accountability as well as in a joint focus on addressing injustices, contributing to the healing of the wounds of all affected, and developing bridges in our fragmented world. The churches are facing difficulties in their pastoral ministry, with the pandemic affecting common prayer and weakening communion among the members of communities. However, many acts of social justice and medical assistance were implemented, creating a network of compassion, generosity, and kindness. The churches become the practical hands of God's love for all human beings. There is still a lot of work to be done in finding new pastoral approaches and constructive strategies to overcome these challenges. Therefore, the two study texts offered by the JWG provide recommendations for better collaboration between different actors at different levels who are facing challenges created by migration, conflict situations, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pursuing its mandate during the pandemic with the help of modern technologies, the JWG was energized and encouraged to fulfil its task and not to give in to ecumenical pessimism and cheap justifications of divisions that contradict the prayer of Christ for his disciples (John 17: 21). In this spirit, the JWG is looking beyond 2021 toward 2025 with the celebration of the 1700th anniversary of the first ecumenical council of Nicaea in 325 that has been and continues to be the common basis of the recognition of the apostolic faith. The Nicene Creed has been a light through the ages, a source of hope, and an antidote against hate, violence, and despair. The year 2025 will be an opportunity to affirm this common faith and to discover how much closer the churches can come to each other by walking, praying, and working together.

B. Scope and content of this report

The report focuses on cooperation between the RCC and the WCC. During this mandate, the JWG gave particular attention to strengthening direct cooperation between Holy See Dicasteries and the programmatic work of the WCC secretariat, together with the member churches and ecumenical partners. By concentrating its efforts in this way, the JWG was fully conscious of the constantly changing contexts that need to be addressed: the ecclesial landscape, with the growth of Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Charismatic churches; the deep geopolitical shifts over recent decades; the devastating consequences of climate change and financial crises; conflicts concerning values and per-

sonal ethics; violence within and between different religious communities; and the growing need for the accompaniment of Christian communities in conflict situations.

The RCC and the WCC, for instance, are two of the four "pillars" of the Global Christian Forum alongside the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) and the Pentecostal World Fellowship (PWF). The RCC and the WCC are part of the Conference of Secretaries of Christian World Communions (CWCs). They are working more and more closely together in the various conventions and programmes of the United Nations (UN), despite their different statuses as observer non-member state and international non-governmental organization granted consultative status by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). But the main emphasis has to be on growing relationships of trust and cooperation between the two parent bodies.

The report consists of three main chapters following this Introduction (Chapter I):

- Chapter II, Walking, Praying, and Working Together, reports on the visit of Pope Francis to the WCC and the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey (June 2018). It was a culminating event of the 70th anniversary of the WCC, directly after the WCC Central Committee meeting that opened with a prayer led by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I.
- This is followed by more information and brief reflections on the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, the programmatic focus of the WCC from the 10th Assembly in Busan in 2013 to the 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe in 2022.
- Chapter III introduces the mandate of the JWG, its composition and its ways of working; highlights the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the JWG in the Centro Pro Unione in Rome in 2015; and presents the work of the JWG from 2014 onwards, with the two study documents that were produced. The two studies with recommendations on peacebuilding in conflict situations and migrants and refugees are both included in this report as appendices. At the end of this chapter, brief reflections on the future mandate of the JWG are presented for consideration at the beginning of this next mandate.
- Chapter IV then gives an overview of the ongoing collaboration between the RCC and the WCC from 2014 to 2021 in different areas of work.

Finally, Chapter V presents a list of the JWG members from 2014 to 2021. It is here that we remember with sincere gratitude the contribution of the Rev. Robina Maria Winbush of the Presbyterian Church (USA), who passed away on 12 March 2019 returning from a pilgrimage to Israel and Palestine.

II. Walking, Praying, and Working Together

A. The visit of Pope Francis to the WCC and the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey (21 June 2018) in the context of the 70th anniversary of the WCC

1. "A pilgrim in quest of unity and peace"

"Ire, Orare, Una Operari: Oecumenica Peregrinatio" ("Walking, Praying and Working Together: An Ecumenical Pilgrimage") was the central theme of the visit of Pope Francis to the WCC on 21 June 2018. The visit began with a prayer service in the chapel of the Ecumenical Centre where Pope Francis offered a significant homily. It continued in the afternoon with an ecumenical meeting in the conference hall of the centre during which he further developed this central theme. A commemorative medal was coined for the occasion. The front shows, in addition to the motto and the date of the visit, an image of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, where Pope Francis met with the students and faculty members, and with WCC leadership. The visit concluded with a Papal Mass in the Palexpo convention centre near Geneva airport for thousands of faithful who had come from all over Switzerland, neighbouring France, and other countries.

Referring to the pilgrimage theme, Pope Francis said in his homily at the Ecumenical Centre:

> Dear brothers and sisters, I have desired to come here, a pilgrim in quest of unity and peace. I thank God because here I have found you, brothers and sisters, already making this same journey. For us as Christians, walking together is not a ploy to strengthen our own positions

> but an act of obedience to the Lord and love for our world. Let us ask the Father to help us walk together all the more resolutely in the ways of the Spirit. May the Cross guide our steps, because there, in Jesus, the walls of separation have already been torn down and all enmity overcome (cf. Eph. 2:14).[1]

Anticipating the theme of his visit to Geneva, Pope Francis spoke in various occasions of seeking a reconciled diversity that implies walking together, praying, and working together. Eight years later, as pope, he explained in Geneva that he was looking for "a reconciled communion aimed at the visible manifestation of the fraternity that even now unites believers."[2]

The moderator of the WCC Central Committee, Dr Agnes Abuom, and the general secretary of the WCC, the Most Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, welcomed Pope Francis in the same spirit, that of a shared pilgrimage toward unity, justice, and peace, and explored further the motive of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace in a world divided and disfigured by injustice, hate, racism, violence, and war. The homily and the message of Pope Francis and the speeches by the moderator of the WCC Central Committee and the WCC general secretary are available on the websites of the PCPCU and the WCC.

2. An ecumenical encounter

On the flight from Geneva back to Rome, Pope Francis summarized his impression of the day: "It was a day of encounter—not mere courtesy, nothing purely formal, but an encounter between human beings. [...] The right word for the day is 'encounter,' and when one person encounters another and feels appreciation for the meeting, this always touches the heart."[3]

The personal encounter is for the Pope an essential feature of ecumenism. He wishes to talk with others and not about one another. For example,

1. Pope Francis, "Homily of the Pope Francis during the Ecumenical Prayer at the WCC," World Council of Churches website, 21 June 2018, https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/homily-of-the-pope-francis-during-the-ecumenical-prayer-at-the-wcc.

2. Pope Francis, "Speech of the Pope Francis during the Ecumenical Meeting at the WCC," World Council of Churches website, 21 June 2018, https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/speech-of-the-pope-francis-during-the-ecumenical-meeting-at-the-wcc.

3. Stephen Brown, "Pope Francis Praises 'Ecumenical Day' in Geneva for WCC Anniversary," World Council of Churches website, 22 June 2018, https://www.oikoumene.org/news/pope-francis-praises-ecumenical-day-in-geneva-for-wcc-anniversary.

he visited Caserta in southern Italy to meet a Pentecostal community; met with the Waldensian community; met Patriarch Kirill, in Cuba; visited the Greek island of Lesbos together with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I and Archbishop Hieronymos of Athens and All Greece; and went to Lund, Sweden, for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and to Geneva—all important stations on an ecumenical journey.

The encounter with young people and the opportunity for in-depth discussion over lunch was at the heart of the visit to the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey. "I was able to discuss many issues in depth," Pope Francis said, particularly about young people, since all churches are concerned about youth, "in a good sense."[4]

3. Facing together a crisis of hope, a crisis of human rights, a crisis of mediation, and a crisis of peace

Also discussed over lunch were issues of peace and human rights as matters of hope. Respect for human rights has weakened over the last decades. There is a lack of enthusiasm or conviction. Pope Francis agreed with WCC leadership in the analysis "that the world and the churches are facing a 'crisis of hope, crisis of human rights, crisis of mediation, [and] crisis of peace.'"[5]

Looking back to the discussion, WCC General Secretary the Most Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit shared the following reflection:

> I think we understand better what needs to drive us together today, if we share this deep sense of crises and the urgency of transformation, personally and collectively as societies and nations, but also as churches. We are all convinced that we must act and bear witness together; we must speak with one voice and are recognized for our common action for solidarity, peace, the environment and justice. In his homily later at the Palexpo, the Holy Father illuminated three words of the Lords' Prayer: 'father', 'bread' and 'forgiveness.' We are one large family. We need to choose a simple lifestyle and support each other in prayer and action. We are never to become tired of forgiving. We can see as a fruit of the ecumenical movement that Christians are moving from conflicts to communion, forgiving each other. When we are praying the Lord's prayer together, we are reminded that there is so much more

4. Brown, "Pope Francis."
5. Brown, "Pope Francis."

> that we have in common and that unites us than what separates us. In this way walking together on the pilgrimage of justice and peace, we can become a sign of hope for the world. Of course, this can never be done in a triumphalist and self-affirmative way. Churches, as we can see these days again, are deeply challenged within themselves. If children are not protected, young persons are pushed aside, the participation of women is not fully recognized or there are traces of racism, we lose all our credibility.[6]

4. Emphasis on the missionary mandate and young people

Pope Francis recalled that the origins of the WCC are in the mission movement. While Pope Francis affirmed the ongoing cooperation with the Commission on Faith and Order, the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, and the office of Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation, and mentioned especially the work with young people at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, he added on a somehow critical note: "The missionary mandate, which is more than *diakonia* and the promotion of human development, cannot be neglected nor emptied of its content. It determines our very identity."[7] For the Most Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, this is a strong reminder to consider carefully how the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace is an expression of the call to be "ambassadors of Christ" engaged in the "ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5). "This is all about our mission as disciples of Christ in, for, and with the world that God has loved so much that God sent his only son to reconcile and redeem it from sin."[8]

5. Going ahead with hope, compelled by the love of Christ

The WCC General Secretary summarized:

> I was very happy to hear Pope Francis saying: 'Ecumenism made us set out in accordance with Christ's will and it will be able to progress if, following the lead of the Spirit, it constantly refuses to withdraw into itself.' The whole day was truly a sign of hope for all who want Christians to be and to act as one in Christ. This day was a landmark. We

6. Internal Document, JWG Plenary Meeting, Ottmaring/Augsburg, 3-7 September 2018.

7. Pope Francis, "Speech during the Ecumenical Meeting at the WCC."

8. Internal Document, JWG Plenary Meeting, Ottmaring/Augsburg, 3-7 September 2018.

will not stop here. We will continue, we can do much more together for those who need us. It is my conviction that the love of Christ compels us to be part of the mission of God and the work for unity and reconciliation, for justice and peace, in the one Church of Christ, in the one world. This gives us hope and strength to go ahead on our way together.[9]

B. The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace from the WCC 10th Assembly in Busan (2013) to the 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe (2022)

The WCC 10th Assembly in Busan in 2013 invited Christians and people of goodwill everywhere to join in a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace: "Participating in God's gift of unity and God's mission of justice and peace (*missio Dei*), [churches are called] to respond to God's will for this world by becoming communities of justice and peace, and by celebrating the fellowship of such communities in collaborative action."[10]

A year later, in 2014, the WCC Central Committee gave further thought to this invitation and the consequences for the work of the WCC member churches and ecumenical partners:

"The 10th Assembly helped us to see that we are already participating in a common journey. Our efforts for unity in our Christian faith are responses to God´s gift of life and God´s call to grow in fellowship. This fellowship is given through the faith and the baptism of the church; it is a spiritual gift. This unity in faith is also truly human, an expression of being created and blessed. It is manifested as a unity based on the core values of *koinonia* that establish and secure the right relation: justice and peace.

Such a shift from a static to a more dynamic understanding of unity can be challenging. Different theological traditions and cultures understand and practice 'pilgrimage' in different ways. Opting for the name of 'pilgrimage of justice and peace' and not 'towards justice and

9. Internal Document, JWG Plenary Meeting, Ottmaring/Augsburg, 3-7 September 2018.

10. "An Invitation to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace," 8 July 2014, World Council of Churches, at: https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/an-invitation-to-the-pilgrimage-of-justice-and-peace.

peace' or 'for justice and peace', the Busan Assembly began to address these questions. The word 'pilgrimage' was chosen to convey that this is a journey with deep spiritual meaning and with profound theological connotations and implications. As a 'pilgrimage of justice and peace', it is neither a journey towards a concrete geographical place nor some simple form of activism. It is a transformative journey that God invites us to in anticipation of the final purpose for the world that the Triune God brings about. The movement of love which flows from the Triune God manifests itself in the promise of justice and peace. They are signs of God's reign to come which is already visible here and now wherever reconciliation and healing are experienced.

Christians are to partake in these signs of God's reign and to struggle for them in response to God's will and promise. The pilgrimage of justice and peace is thus grounded in God's own mission for the world and in the example of Jesus. Following Jesus means meeting him wherever people suffer injustice, violence and war. To experience God's presence with the most vulnerable, the wounded, and the marginalized is a transformative experience. Alive in the Spirit, Christians discover their deepest power and energy for the transformation of an unjust world, joining with other faith communities and all people of good will as companions on the way.

The search for Christian unity 'so that the world may believe' may embrace the unity of the whole cosmos as the final goal of the eschatological promise of God's reign [...] . Walking side by side with one another, we are inviting others to go with us for the healing and reconciliation of this suffering and conflict striven world.[11]

The pilgrimage became the shared framework for all programmatic work of the WCC. It gave inspiration and direction to many of the member churches and ecumenical partners. A theological study group contributed to Bible studies and reflections from different contexts. It worked also on insights gained from pilgrim team visits to countries that were chosen by the WCC as priority countries in different regions because of the severe challenges of justice and peace they are facing.

The Commission on Faith and Order explored further the theological basis of the pilgrimage with strong RCC participation. The commission pub-

11. "An Invitation," WCC.

lished in 2019 the booklet *Come and See: A Theological Invitation to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace* in which it states:

> The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace invites the churches to follow Jesus, and to journey together toward visible unity so we may come and see where he abides. The word "pilgrimage" suggests movement, a source and a goal, a way that is followed and sought, and a journey. In choosing the theme Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, the WCC has not only affirmed the desire to move together, but also it affirms that its movement is directed toward the reign of God, that it is a transformative way of faith and life, and that it is a journey which churches take together with other companions and in the context of the whole world.[12]

Reflection by Study Group One of the Commission on Faith and Order to flesh out the work of *Come and See* resulted in two further texts: (1) *Love and Witness: Proclaiming the Peace of the Lord Jesus Christ in a Religiously Plural World*[13] and (2*) Cultivate and Care: An Ecumenical Theology of Justice for and within Creation*.[14] Drafts of each were presented to the Commission on Faith and Order meeting in Nanjing, China, in June 2019 and approved with edits by the whole commission. The RCC participation in the drafting groups was vital.

The introduction to this report has explained how the JWG has made the pilgrimage its own. It has built its work on the pilgrimage approach that resonates so well with the vision and ideas put forward by Pope Francis.

12. Faith and Order Paper Number 224 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2019), 26f.
13. Faith and Order Paper No. 230 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2020).
14. Faith and Order Paper No. 226 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2020).

III. The Joint Working Group

A. The Joint Working Group's mandate, composition, and way of working

The JWG was established in May 1965 by mutual agreement between the WCC and the RCC as an instrument of collaboration between the two partners. Its purpose, described in 1966, was to interpret trends in the development of the ecumenical movement and "to explore possibilities of dialogue and collaboration, to study problems jointly, and to report to the competent authorities of either side."[1] Thus, the JWG has an advisory function and serves as an instrument for promoting cooperation between the RCC and the WCC.

The JWG "initiates, evaluates, and sustains forms of collaboration between the WCC and the RCC, especially between the various organs and programmes of the WCC and the RCC."[2] The JWG has the ongoing task to analyze and reflect on new developments in the world and the Church, and come up with recommendations for the parent bodies—the PCPCU and the WCC—as to how best to respond together to new challenges. As such, the JWG functions as a catalyst for ecumenical cooperation between the RCC and the WCC member churches.

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1. Jeffrey Gros, Thomas F. Best, and Lorelei F. Fuchs, eds., *Growth in Agreement III: International Dialogue Texts and Agreed Statements, 1998–2005,* Faith and Order Paper No. 204 (Geneva: WCC Publications; Grand Rapids, USA/Cambridge, UK: Williams Eerdmans Publishing, 2008), 515.

2. Cf. the collection of JWG mandates from 1966, 1975, and 1999 in *Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches: Eighth Report* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2005), 34; see there also Appendix B "The History of the RCC/WCC Joint Working Group," 38-44.

The JWG receives its mandate from the WCC assembly and the PCPCU—after changes of the WCC constitution at the assembly in Busan—every eight years. The structure and style of the JWG is meant to be flexible and adaptable to the changing needs and priorities of the JWG agenda. Following recommendations of the Ninth Report of the JWG, PCPCU and WCC leadership agreed to reduce the number of JWG members to 20 and to make sure that relevant Dicasteries of the Holy See and the core programmatic areas of the WCC were represented in the membership.

The JWG is free to set up subgroups to study specific topics on its agenda. Some topics may require the participation of experts from outside the group who may contribute to the ongoing study. This time, the two topics "peacebuilding in situations of conflict and violence" and "migrants and refugees: ecumenical challenges and opportunity" were chosen by the JWG plenary to accompany the developing cooperation in these areas of work in response to the urgent needs of our times.

Meetings of the JWG plenary and the JWG executive were always accompanied by common prayer, Bible reading, and reflection. The time for sharing information and experiences by individual JWG members and the parent bodies has been an important and fruitful element of every meeting, connecting the discussions and reflections of the group with different contextual realities. The sharing provides a precious space to monitor and discern developments concerning the parent bodies and the ecumenical movement at local, regional, and international levels. This regular and structured exchange is conducive to building trust, to nurturing a quality of relationships that also allows participants to address difficult issues with mutual respect, and to nurturing common interest in the flourishing of the one ecumenical movement. The JWG executive has proven to be a very helpful instrument for the exchange of information, the discussion of common concerns, and the fostering of cooperation.

At the end of each mandate, the JWG prepares and submits to its parent bodies a detailed report on its activities with recommendations for the future. The report is usually published in four languages (English, French, German, and Spanish) and presented to the PCPCU and to the WCC assembly.

B. Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Joint Working Group

The 50th anniversary of the JWG was celebrated with a public event held at the Centro Pro Unione, an ecumenical centre of the Franciscan Friars of the

Atonement in Rome, Italy, on 23 June 2015. The event included greetings by Pope Francis that were delivered by Cardinal Kurt Koch (president of the PCPCU) and a speech by the Most Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, the General Secretary of the WCC. These two substantial contributions were accompanied by presentations on the JWG's history, documents, and achievements by Mgr John Radano (adjunct professor of systematic theology at Seton Hall University) and the Rev. Dr Diane Kessler (executive director [retired] of the Massachusetts Council of Churches), and a personal testimony by Bishop Jonas Jonson (Bishop Emeritus of Strängnäs, Church of Sweden, and former JWG co-moderator).[3]

Pope Francis affirmed the important role of the JWG for ecumenical dialogue and cooperation, but also challenged the group. He said, the JWG "should not be an inward-looking forum," but instead should increasingly become "a 'think tank,' open to all the opportunities and challenges facing the Churches today in their mission of accompanying suffering humanity on the path to the Kingdom, by imbuing society and culture with Gospel truths and values." In the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*—the Pope added—"I noted that realities are more important than ideas. The Joint Working Group must be oriented to addressing the real concerns of the Churches throughout the world. In this way, it will be better suited to proposing collaborative steps that not only draw the Churches closer together, but also ensure that they offer an effective diakonia suited to the people's needs."[4]

The Most Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit underlined the importance of the JWG for RCC–WCC relationships. He warmly welcomed the publication of the papal encyclical *Laudato si'* in the week before:

> "We cannot underestimate how important it is that by now all major traditions of Christianity have embraced their responsibility for the earth as our common home that we share with each other and all God's creatures. We are recognizing our common destiny and responsibilities and we share in the vision that God will finally restore the beauty of

3. All speeches and presentations are available in *Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity: Information Service* 145, no. 1 (2015), and from the WCC website.

4. Pope Francis, "Message of Pope Francis on the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Joint Working Group between the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches," *Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity: Information Service* 145, no. 1 (2015): 25.

all creation as it was meant to be, and overcome injustice, violence and war in the way of God's true justice and true peace."[5]

The WCC General Secretary concluded his speech, pointing to the Pilgrimage for Justice and Peace:

"The WCC Busan assembly in 2013 encouraged all people of good will to join in a pilgrimage of justice and peace. Frequently Pope Francis speaks of the unity on the way that will grow with our mutual commitment and accountability in following Jesus. And often he reminds us that following Jesus implies not to be afraid of the powers that be, and even not to fear violence and death. Today we are shocked at the new examples of martyrdom. The martyrs of faith are signs of the unity that grows and breaches all. Expressing our gratitude for the common journey of the JWG over the last 50 years, we need to be aware of this deeper theological reading of our context when we embark on a new phase of our cooperation. What we cannot have, is business as usual. It must be an expression of our faith and a witness to the love of God revealed in Christ."[6]

C. The work of the Joint Working Group 2014–2022

During its tenth term, the JWG carried out its work on the basis of the mandate that had been established in the early seventies (published in the Fourth Report of the JWG in 1975) that is still considered by the parent bodies to offer a suitable framework for its work. In "Prospects for the Future," the Ninth Report (2013) proposed that during the next term the JWG should focus on some specific aspects of the mandate that were particularly relevant for ecumenical cooperation at the present time. In particular, it proposed that the JWG would not duplicate the work of the Commission on Faith and Order but would focus on more pastoral and practical matters. In a meeting that took place in 2013, the president of PCPCU and the WCC General Secretary agreed that in order to make the JWG more operational, the membership should be reduced to 20 members (10 for each parent body), to which external experts could be seconded when needed.

5. Olav Fykse Tveit, "Greeting of the WCC General Secretary Reverend Dr Olav Fykse Tveit," *Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity: Information Service* 145, no. 1 (2015): 27.

6. Fykse Tveit, "Greeting," 27.

Following these recommendations, under the leadership of the two co-moderators, supported by the two co-secretaries, the JWG developed a style of working based on a threefold methodology: executive, plenary, and theme group meetings.

The executive composed of four members on each side met once or twice a year in order to evaluate the progress of the work, to develop recommendations for future steps, and to plan for the next plenary. The plenary, which also met annually, in September or October for four to five days, has been the most important work instrument within the framework of the JWG methodology. It received the reports from the theme groups on the state of the ongoing projects, discussed and edited the draft documents, and offered a space for an open discussion on the topics of common interest in connection with the global ecumenical movement. The theme groups, to which external experts are seconded, met separately between the plenaries and sometimes organized extra meetings in relation to the plenaries, working on the respective texts following the recommendations from the plenary and executive.

These various meetings took place in different locations around Europe including Geneva/Bossey (Switzerland), Rome (Italy), Dublin (Ireland), Lisbon (Portugal), Târgoviște (Romania), Ottmaring/Augsburg (Germany), Warsaw (Poland), and Lyon (France). An important part of the work has also been undertaken digitally via videoconference, especially after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The JWG met for its first plenary in September 2015 in Rome. This meeting was preceded by one of the executive in March in the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva to discuss the mandate and working style of the JWG and to identify main concerns of the present time for the churches to be proposed to the plenary. The participants in the plenary discussed the situation of the ecumenical movement in the first decades of the third millennium of Christianity and the status quo of the relationship between the RCC and the WCC. They identified peacebuilding and migration as two important issues for the churches at the present time and decided to create two theme groups to work on these topics with the assistance of external experts. They also decided that by the end of the mandate, on the basis of the material prepared by each theme group, the JWG would adopt two concise documents of pastoral character offering to Christian communities around the world practical guidelines for their possible collaboration regarding the issues of peacebuilding and migrants and refugees. While launching the work of the new mandate, the plenary also assessed its past work during the solemn celebration of the 50th

anniversary of the establishment of the JWG that took place at the Centro Pro Unione on 23 June 2015 (see more in section III, B).

During the mandate, the entire JWG met seven times. The last plenary, in April 2021, took place online due to the pandemic crisis. All the meetings included plenary sessions and work in theme groups and sometimes in smaller discussion and task groups. Each meeting also has offered the occasion to visit different local communities and to interact with church leaders. These encounters allowed the participants to discover joyfully the sometimes surprisingly close and broad collaboration of Christian communities on the grassroots level in preparing and celebrating together the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, in maintaining fraternal relations among local church leaders, in working ecumenically with young people and students, in joining efforts in helping the refugees and the poor, and in organizing joint projects focusing on mission and evangelization.

A spiritual dimension has always been an essential aspect of all JWG meetings. Common prayer at the beginning and at the end of each working day, reading of scripture and exchange around the word of God, participation in common prayer with local host communities, and visits to their churches and spiritual sites have been an integral part of JWG meetings. Giving priority to the spiritual life has reflected a shared conviction of the participants that the full visible unity to which all ecumenical initiatives are directed will not be an effect of human work but a gift from God, for which as Christians we need to continue to pray together humbly and faithfully.

Another constituent element of all executive and plenary meetings has been the exchange of information and fraternal sharing about church life and the spiritual experiences of local communities in different parts of the world. The situation of the Church in various socio-political contexts; the challenges raised by globalization, secularization, and considerable lessening of religious practices in some parts of the world; the challenges created by global migration; the growing gap between the rich and the poor; ecumenical formation; and participation of youth in church life are all aspects that have continued to be included in this exchange. This sharing enabled participants not only to be updated on the situation of global Christianity but also to learn about some specific developments in the ecumenical movement at local, regional, and international levels.

All JWG meetings included reports from both the PCPCU and the WCC staff on current work and ongoing dialogues as well as other ecumenical projects. An important task of the JWG is to monitor the ongoing

cooperation and relationships between different programmatic areas of the WCC and the relevant Dicasteries of the RCC, monitoring new possibilities for cooperation and stimulating the parent bodies by proposing steps for new initiatives. The discussions that followed these reports have usually focused on assessing the current state of the relationship between the parent bodies and identifying appropriate ways of strengthening and deepening it. They also permitted the JWG to evaluate together the changing landscape of global Christianity with the aim of serving in the most appropriate way the search for the visible unity of the Church.

The sharing together in spiritual life and the exchange of information and experiences regarding the life of the Church and developments in the ecumenical movement were instrumental in building trust and nurturing relationships within the group, ultimately facilitating topical discussions. Sharing of meals and coffee breaks or joining each other for a walk during breaks helped to build a spirit of empathy and friendship within the fellowship of the group. There is no better way of describing the work of the JWG during its tenth mandate than by using the subtitle of its associated report: *Walking, Praying, and Working Together*.

D. Study documents

1. Peace Is a Treasure for All: An Ecumenical Reflection on Peacebuilding in Situations of Conflict and Violence

Without walking and acting together, especially in times of crisis and conflict, there is no peace nor is there authentic visible unity. Christians are called to be peacemakers, and "Christ is our peace" (Eph. 2:14). In *Peace Is a Treasure for All,* the JWG urges Christian churches to build relationships among each other and with the world. As peacebuilding efforts are not the legacy of Christians alone but are common to many religions and civil and non-governmental organizations, Christians aim for all to work together for peace to heal the present broken world and the battered earth.

The core aspiration of all religions is love, peace, and fraternity. Religion *per se* has nothing to do with violence. Admittedly, religions have their dark and troubled side but only because some people exploit and manipulate religion for ulterior motives. Many religions offer rich imagery, teachings, and fundamental values to promote peace. Moreover, churches in the ecumenical movement of the last century have established fruitful ways of communication and cooperation on many levels to promote justice and peace together

and to support dialogue. They have discovered that dialogue is the only way to really overcome conflict and to achieve reconciliation.

In three sections, this action- and cooperation-oriented document moves from the fundamental question *What is Peace?* to *What threatens peace?* and to *What contributes to peacebuilding?* Each question is addressed from the transversal perspectives of culture, religion, and dialogue since culture and religion, when engaged in and open for dialogue, play a pivotal role in peacebuilding. A fourth section was added to address challenges to peacebuilding and sustaining peace due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the face of the actual multidimensional challenges, the most vulnerable are the conflict-affected and post-conflict countries. The sustained contribution of faith actors and communities is crucial in preventing conflicts, mediating strife, and post-conflict rebuilding of peaceful coexistence.

The document expresses the conviction that peace is achievable in all situations of conflict and suggests that dialogue is the obligatory path to the building of a reconciled world. Christians need to explore these three questions together and also with people of other religions and all those of goodwill in order to shape a culture of peace. For Christians, it is not optional but mandatory to foster a deep sensitivity to God's will and love as manifested in Christ. On this basis, the document proposes ways in which the ecumenical relations between the RCC and the WCC can be intensified to support peacebuilding in situations of conflict and violence.

Members of the study group:

WCC:

1. The Prof. Dr Friederike Nüssel, co-coordinator
2. The Rev. Dr Kondothra M. George
3. The Rev. Robina Maria Winbush
4. The Rev. Dr Martin Robra
5. Expert 1: Mr Peter Prove
6. Expert 2: The Rev. Dr Peniel Rajkumar

PCPCU:

1. The Prof. Dr Annemarie Mayer, co-coordinator
2. The Rev. Dr John Crossin, OSFS
3. Mgr. Dr Indunil J. Kankanamalage
4. Mgr. Dr Juan Usma Gómez
5. Expert 1: The Rev. Michel Jalakh
6. Expert 2: The Prof. Dr Alberto Quattrucci

2. Migrants and Refugees: Ecumenical Challenges and Opportunities

The JWG had begun a reflection on migration during its ninth mandate (2007–2013). The first plenary of the tenth mandate, held in Geneva in September 2015, decided to pursue this reflection in relation to the ongoing

refugee crisis in the world and to the changing landscape of world Christianity correlated with migration. It was decided that by the end of the mandate the JWG would present a concise document of a pastoral and practical character proposing a set of guidelines and recommendations to be used by churches in local contexts in order to foster ecumenical cooperation in addressing together the issue of migrants and refugees. Consequently, a study group was established, which included members of the JWG and external experts on both sides. Following the discussions during the 2016 plenary meeting in Bossey, Switzerland, a small drafting committee was established. The first draft of the text was presented to the plenary in Lisbon, Portugal, in September 2017. Following recommendations from the plenary, on 1 February 2018 a drafting meeting was organized in Bossey with the participation of some JWG members and external experts. The participants in the meeting proposed several modifications to the initial draft with regards to the structure and content of the text. A new draft, significantly different from the previous one, was then presented during the plenary in Ottmaring/Augsburg, Germany, in 2018. The plenary recommended a merger of both texts. This task was completed by the Rev. Michel Charbonnier (WCC) and Prof. Dr Teresa Francesca Rossi (PCPCU) by May 2019. The executive, which met the same month in Warsaw, Poland, studied the text and made several comments and suggestions in order to make the document more pastoral and relevant for practical use by grassroots communities. On 10–11 July 2019, a meeting was organized in Rome to edit the new draft following recommendations from the executive. The revised draft was sent to all the members and experts for further comments. During the plenary meeting in Lyon, France, in September 2019, several sessions were dedicated to editing and amending the text together. The plenary unanimously agreed to the document and recommended that it be presented to the parent bodies after the necessary editorial revision.

The unexpected outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic had an immediate impact on the situation of people on the move. Restrictive measures introduced by civil authorities have greatly affected mobility and migration. For this reason, the executive committee recommended that the document be revised. This work was undertaken by the co-conveners of the study group, and the revised text was sent to the JWG members for comments. Subsequently, the revised document was approved by the plenary.

The document is composed of five sections preceded by a letter to the reader from the co-moderators and followed by a prayer. The letter identifies

the three aims of the text: 1) to offer a biblical and theological perspective on migration, 2) to identify ecumenical challenges and opportunities presented by migration, and 3) to provide recommendations for ecumenical cooperation on issues related to migrants and refugees.

Section one, "The signs we see," offers a summary description of the complex phenomenon of migration in today's globalized world. It states that the term "migrant" should be understood in a comprehensive way as it includes a varied range of categories of people such as migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees, internally displaced people, and survivors of human trafficking. Sometimes migration is voluntary, but often it is forced by war, climate change, or poverty. The text presents causes that push people to migrate and deplores the dehumanization that often characterizes migration. It then lists the positive aspects of migration for both the migrants and the receiving communities.

Section two, "The vision we share," develops a Christian understanding of migration. It recalls that migration has to be viewed from the perspective of an ever-present God, intervening in human history. From a faith perspective, migration touches the inner core of Christian self-understanding and tradition. Being a pilgrim people is also a mark of the Church. The Church's itinerancy is instrumental in fulfilling its mission to witness to God's lasting love for God's creation.

Section three, "The principles we uphold," presents and explains some basic principles that Christian communities should follow when dealing with the issue of migration, such as sanctity of life, inviolable human dignity and human rights that need to be respected, universal destination of goods and the care of creation, the common good and distributive justice, and the principle of welcoming Christ in the stranger. These principles can help Christian communities to analyze the phenomenon of migration and to plan a line of action in response to the opportunities and challenges of migration.

Section four, "'The actions we take," states that challenges posed by migration demand a coordinated, effective, and immediate response by the churches, societies, and states as well as the international community. Inspired by Pope Francis' Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees in 2018, it then develops a set of concrete recommendations for action around the four keywords: welcoming, protecting, promoting, integrating.

Section five, "Churches working together," recognizes that in many parts of the world there is already fruitful ecumenical cooperation to assist migrants. The text then recommends to episcopal conferences, national and

regional councils of churches, and ecumenical organizations specific actions that should be undertaken ecumenically as much as possible in welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants.

The final prayer is a call to God for protection and divine help for migrants, refugees, and displaced people.

Members of the study group

WCC
The Rev. Michel Charbonnier
The Rev. Ofelia Alvarez Coleman
The Rev. Canon Dr Olivia Nassaka Banja
The Rev. Prof. Odair Pedroso Mateus
Expert 1: Dr Améle Ekue, co-coordinator
Expert 2: The Rev. Dr Katalina Tahaafe Williams

PCPCU:
The Rev. Fabio Baggio, CS, co-coordinator
The Most Rev. Rodolfo Valenzuela Núñez
The Prof. Dr Teresa Francesca Rossi
The Rev. Dr Andrzej Choromański
Expert 1: The Rev. Aldo Skoda
Expert 2: The Rev. Gabriele Bentoglio

E. Sharing reflections for the future mandate

In the current mandate we have learned that walking, praying, working are fundamentals of our being and acting together. They not only foster trust among the parent bodies but also lead to new dynamics in common witness. Through them, we are already realizing some dimensions of Christian unity. The new key to understanding our common striving for unity is therefore the image of a joint pilgrimage. Nevertheless, togetherness can be understood in different ways. It brings challenges and misunderstandings. The visible unity of Christians, though costly, remains our common vision and our constant goal against any pessimism.

Grateful for the fruits this mandate has achieved in the last years, the JWG offers the following recommendations for the next mandate:

- Churches must be encouraged to make the search for unity concrete and practical. There are urgent issues today, which are important and challenging for all churches individually and commonly. Identifying and analyzing these issues, the parent bodies must respond to them in all their joint efforts by making the value of the Christian perspective and the Christian voice more visible. As churches are present in all continents and at the same time are part of the changing social, political, and ecclesial landscape through massive migration, they need to stress the unity of the human family in order to affirm the ecumenicity of social challenges.

- The JWG should provide a specific contribution to the journey toward 2025, the celebration of 1700 years from the first Ecumenical Council in Nicaea (325). The JWG, alongside the work of the Commission on Faith and Order, could offer a specific contribution building on its own experience. Preparing for 2025 is about reaffirming the apostolic faith and passing it on. In this way, the celebration in 2025 could lead to understanding the search for Christian unity anew today. We experience new forms of tensions among churches and new forms of fundamentalism in the churches. Therefore, the conscious reconnecting with the transmission of the apostolic faith as a shared task needs to receive constant attention. In the era of digitalization, globalization, and quick changes in the political and social spheres, new forms and paradigms of transmitting the apostolic faith are necessary. We therefore encourage the future mandate to explore and find concrete ways of transmitting together the apostolic faith and of engaging with it in intra-Christian and interreligious contexts as well as of addressing common challenges in the secular world.
- Change is intrinsic to every aspect of existence. Yet, religion is often seen as fearing, opposing, or rejecting change. The ecumenical movement too must change over time. Over 60 years of bilateral and multilateral ecumenical engagement by churches have unveiled much that unites Christ's followers in faith and life. However, there is now a growing feeling that, especially at the theological level, that path of re-discovery of all that the churches hold in common calls for creative revision. And this is happening when all churches are facing huge challenges from a globalizing society increasingly unconcerned with religion in general and even less with theological arguments that appear far removed from real life experience and when, internally, churches are losing resources and even spiritual and missionary zeal. At the same time, new forms of church are multiplying and bringing into question long-standing ecclesial structures, visions of the faith, and policies that seemed unchangeable.
- In this situation the question becomes: what future does committed and organized ecumenism see ahead? The JWG in its next mandate might profitably begin its work by engaging in a serious reflection on where the ecumenical movement is headed. What feasible path forward is realistic and bears promise? While remaining faithful to the traditional goal of full visible communion among the churches, in obedience to the Lord himself (John 17), what reasonable and intermediate goals are possible? Such an

inquiry in the present situation forces another pressing ecumenical question: how should the churches deal with theological, liturgical, canonical, and moral diversity? Some are calling for a new approach to unity in diversity, one that neither neglects the demands of unity nor overemphasizes legitimate diversity. Can the JWG contribute to revitalizing the ecumenical movement by offering the bilateral and multilateral dialogues signposts—theologically valid and methodologically effective—toward a more productive future journey?

- Other possible working themes for the next mandate could be: political exploitation of religion (religion can be utilized as a divisive tool); continued reflections on the theme of the WCC assembly; attention to the presence of new forms of church (Pentecostalism, charismatic megachurches, etc.); the challenge of evangelization in the secularized societies of today.

The current mandate would recommend concentrating on these essentials that are central for the future journey of the churches together and as joint efforts of the parent bodies making themselves accountable in view of the changing realities of the world and of world Christianity.

IV. Collaboration between the RCC and the WCC

A. Accompanying churches together in prayer and in advocacy

The period 2014–2021 has seen a significant increase in the frequency, intensity, and quality of collaboration between the RCC and the WCC in accompanying churches together in prayer and in advocacy. A few emblematic examples of such collaboration must suffice for illustrative purposes.

- *Appointment of a Roman Catholic permanent observer to the WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs*

During the period under review, Mgr Bernard Munono Muyembe of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development—DPIHD (formerly of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace—PCJP) has served as a permanent observer on the WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA). The CCIA now consists of 35 members appointed by the WCC Central Committee on the basis of nominations received from member churches, with the addition during this period of two permanent observers—one from the RCC and one from the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA). Mgr Munono Muyembe has attended CCIA annual meetings in March 2016 (Geneva, Switzerland), February–March 2017 (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia), February–March 2018 (Cartagena, Colombia), February 2019 (Bali, Indonesia), and February 2020 (Brisbane, Australia), and has actively contributed to CCIA activities in accordance with the CCIA's mandate as outlined in its by-laws to serve "as a medium of counsel and action and as an organ in formulating the Christian mind on world issues and bringing that mind effectively to bear upon such issues."

In light of this structural relationship, WCC CCIA Director Peter Prove now undertakes regular and frequent visits to Rome in order to consult with counterparts at the DPIHD and the Secretariat of State, and with other Roman Catholic partners.

- *Collaboration in support of the South Sudan Council of Churches*

The WCC has enjoyed close collaboration with the RCC in support of the work of the South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC), which has been under the leadership of Fr James Oyet Latansio as general secretary since April 2015, for joint ecumenical witness and action for peace in that country.

- *Promoting nuclear disarmament*

The RCC and the WCC share common perspectives in favour of nuclear disarmament and have collaborated in initiatives supporting the new Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. One example is the WCC participation in the international symposium "Prospects for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons and for Integral Disarmament" organized by the DPIHD in November 2017.

- *Interfaith symposium on statelessness, 7–8 December 2017, Rome*

An interfaith symposium on statelessness was organized by the CCIA and the WCC office of Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation, and co-sponsored by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Council for World Mission (CWM), with the participation of colleagues from the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (Mgr Indunil J. Kodithuwakku) and from the DPIHD (Mgr Munono Muyembe).

- *Engagement of Roman Catholic partners in ecumenical efforts for peace and reunification of the Korean Peninsula*

The WCC has a long history of promoting dialogue, people-to-people encounters, and dialogue for peace and reunification on the Korean Peninsula and has kept Roman Catholic counterparts, including Pope Francis himself, informed of initiatives in this regard. During his visit to the WCC on 21 June 2018, Pope Francis met briefly with representatives of the Korean Christian Federation (KCF) of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, longstanding partners of the WCC who were visiting Geneva at the same time. Among other things, the WCC has sought to engage Roman Catholic counterparts in the Ecumenical Forum for Peace, Reunification, and Cooperation on the Korean Peninsula (EFK) that the WCC convenes. Both the Community of

Sant'Egidio and the Catholic Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Institute are currently counted as members of this network.

- *Joint delegation to the Democratic Republic of Congo, August 2018*

Following conversations on the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) between WCC General Secretary the Most Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit and Pope Francis during the latter's visit to Geneva in June 2018, it was agreed that a joint delegation to the DRC was an urgent priority. Archbishop Protase Rugambwa (secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples), Archbishop Marcel Utembi (president of the National Episcopal Conference of Congo—CENCO), and Fr Ildevert Mathurin Mouanga (rector of the Theological Seminary Emile Biayenda in Congo-Brazzaville) joined an ecumenical delegation including WCC General Secretary Tveit, the Rev. Frank Chikane (CCIA moderator), Bishop Arnold Temple (president of the All Africa Conference of Churches—AACC), and Archbishop Onesphore Rwaje (AACC special envoy to the African Union) for a visit to the DRC on 18–21 August 2018 as the country prepared for elections on 30 December 2018. The delegation sought to encourage faith communities in the DRC to continue to speak together with the same language and to concentrate on the common good.

- *Joint conference on xenophobia, racism, and populist nationalism in the context of global migration, September 2018*

On 18–20 September 2018, the WCC and the DPIHD, in collaboration with the PCPCU, jointly organized in Rome the international conference "Xenophobia, Racism, and Populist Nationalism in the Context of Global Migration," which sought to address the increasingly hostile environment faced by migrants and refugees in many receiving countries around the world. The conference message observed that "Churches are [and must] be places of memory, hope and love. In the name of Jesus, who shared the experience of the migrant and the refugee and who offered the Word of hope to the excluded and the suffering, we commit even more strongly to the promotion of a culture of encounter and dialogue."[1]

1. "Message from the conference 'Xenophobia, Racism, and Populist Nationalism in the Context of Global Migration,'" 19 September 2018, World Council of Churches website, https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/message-from-the-conference-xenophobia-racism-and-populist-nationalism-in-the-context-of-global-migration.

- *Cooperation on HIV*

The "High-Level Dialogue to Assess Progress on and Intensify Commitment to Scaling Up Diagnosis and Treatment of Paediatric HIV" was organized by the WCC Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (WCC-EAA) and convened by Cardinal Peter Turkson at the Vatican on 6–7 December 2018, together with the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation, and Caritas Internationalis. In February 2019, the WCC-EAA, in collaboration with the International Catholic Migration Commission, PEPFAR, UNAIDS, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNHCR, and the WHO organized the workshop "Migration and HIV: Strengthening Collaboration among Faith-Based Organizations, Multi-Lateral Organizations, Governments, and Civil Society to Address HIV Risk, Provision of Services, and Advocacy."

- *Collaboration in the context of World Water Week*

The WCC Ecumenical Water Network (WCC-EWN) has established a pattern of collaboration with the PCJP/DPIHD during World Water Week, which has been organized annually by the Stockholm International Water Institute since 1991. In 2016, Cardinal Turkson took part in the joint event "Water and Faith" at the World Water Wee.k conference in Stockholm, Sweden. Subsequently, there have been many such joint initiatives during World Water Week. Most recently, at the "Water and Faith" event in 2019, Dr Tebaldo Vinciguerra, representative of the DPIHD/ Holy See, took part.

- *Cooperation in the context of the "Human Fraternity" process*

The WCC has recently committ.ed to join the RCC/PCID and other partners in the Higher Committee of Human Fraternity to promote the values and objectives of the document *Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* co-signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar on 4 February 2019.

- *Collaboration on matters of human rights and of violence and discrimination against women*

Since 2020, the WCC and Roman Catholic partners have worked together to advocate for the recognition of obstetric fistula, a serious injury to a woman's body when insufficient medical assistance is available during childbirth, as a human rights violation and as a form of violence and discrimination against women. It is largely a hidden issue due to the stigma attached to the condition. Affected women remain in their homes and do not seek medical assistance. Complications may include depression, infertility, and social isolation. The WHO estimates that more than 2 million young women live with this untreated heath problem in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa and that there are 100,000 new cases worldwide each year, but the true figure is not known. Several meetings have taken place between the WCC and Roman Catholic partners in the last couple of years, resulting in jointly drafted and signed statements on the matter to the UN Human Rights Council. In 2021, the WCC and Roman Catholic partners started to include information and recommendations about obstetric fistula in their reporting to the Universal Periodic Review mechanism of the Human Rights Council when relevant countries came up for review; countries have included Tanzania and South Sudan, and the WCC also has supported Roman Catholic partners to report on the issue for Zimbabwe.

B. Overcoming divisions: Faith and Order

According to its by-laws, the purpose of the Commission on Faith and Order is "to serve the churches as they call one another to visible unity in one faith and in one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and common life in Christ, through witness and service to the world, and advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe."[2] The RCC, through the PCPCU, is fully engaged in the work of the commission and in its leadership.

When the present JWG mandate began, Faith and Order had two items of work in progress. The first, on ecclesiology, was the analysis and interpretation of the responses to the convergence text *The Church: Towards a Common Vision (TCTCV)*, which had been adopted in 2012, published in 2013, and submitted to churches, councils of churches, and ecumenical organiza-

2. Minutes of the Commission on Faith and Order, Meeting in Nanjing, China, 13-19 June 2019, Faith and Order Paper No. 227, WCC Publications, Geneva, 2019, 117-123, art. 3.1.

tions for response. The second piece of work, on ethics, following the publication in 2013 of the study text *Moral Discernment in the Churches*, was the continuation of the study of factors involved in moral decision making and teaching that lead to tensions within and among churches.

During its 2015 meeting, the newly appointed Commission on Faith and Order indicated a third area of work as it decided to contribute theologically to the WCC's call to churches to join hands in addressing together issues related to justice and peace.

What follows is an overview of the work accomplished in those three areas: (1) ecclesiology; (2) ethics; and (3) the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. A note on the project of a World Conference on Faith and Order completes this section of the report.

(1) Ecclesiology

Between 2016 and 2020, the Faith and Order study group on ecclesiology analyzed one by one almost eighty responses to the convergence text *TCTCV*. As the analysis of those responses progressed, the study group identified sixteen themes, which clustered most of the controversial issues mentioned in the responses. Papers on those sixteen cluster themes, summarizing what the responses said about them, were then written by members of the study group and discussed among them several times.

Early in 2020, the study group decided to present the results of its work in three ways: the publication in two volumes of the responses to *TCTCV* under the title *Churches Respond to* The Church: Towards a Common Vision*;* the publication of the papers written by members of the commissioner on the cluster themes identified in the responses; and a summary report, called *What Are the Churches Saying about the Church? Key Findings and Proposals from the Responses to* The Church: Towards a Common Vision*,* on the ecumenical significance of the responses.

Since 2015, the same Faith and Order study group on ecclesiology has been exploring the possibilities of a constructive dialogue with what *TCTCV* called "emerging churches": communities and denominations that have not been traditionally involved in ecumenical dialogue about visible unity. This has brought the Faith and Order work closer to the ministry of the Global Christian Forum.

By January 2020, two consultations and one workshop had been organized in Tanzania, the United States of America, and Brazil, respectively. A fourth meeting was foreseen in Asia but did not take place because of the

pandemic. It is hoped that this second area of ecclesiological work will be one of the main focuses of Faith and Order after the next WCC assembly.

(2) Ethics

In order to continue the work undertaken in *Moral Discernment in the Churches*, published in 2013, the Faith and Order study group in charge of this theme designed two consultations meant to approach ecclesial moral reasoning and teaching by first listening to a self-description by the different traditions about their moral reasoning process and then by analyzing historical examples in which change occurred.

The first consultation focused on authority and moral teaching in different Christian traditions. The second focused on the sensitive issue of change: based on historical examples, it examined how churches reconsidered moral teaching in order to remain faithful to fundamental Christian principles in light of new situations and why some topics are church dividing whereas other topics are not.

The result of the two consultations is a reflection in progress—firstly, on the common ground for moral reasoning that churches hold together despite their disagreements and, secondly, on the clarification regarding sources of disagreement—as a contribution to ecumenical dialogue on ethics.

Three publications convey the findings of the present stage of the work on moral discernment. The first, *Churches and Moral Discernment: Learning from Traditions*, appeared in 2021. It makes available the papers on authority and moral teaching in the different churches. The second, *Churches and Moral Discernment: Learning from History*, published in February 2021, includes the studies of historical examples from different traditions in which the reconsideration of moral teaching or its application may have been at stake. The third publication, *Churches and Moral Discernment: Facilitating Dialogue to Build Koinonia*, is the report of the study. It includes a theological reflection on the dialogue on controversial moral issues and offers a tool to facilitate mutual understanding for a constructive dialogue.

(3) Justice and peace

The decision to contribute theologically to the WCC's call to a pilgrimage of justice and peace was the opportunity for Faith and Order to do multilateral ecumenical theology on non-divisive practical issues of mission and witness with a view to the growth of the churches in fellowship.

This relatively new way of doing Faith and Order work yielded a trilogy of short texts, which draw from the great traditions as they argue for the common engagement of churches in response to contemporary challenges.

The first text, adopted in 2017 and published in 2018 was *Come and See: A Theological Invitation to the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace*. The other two, published in 2020, develop two themes announced in *Come and See*. The first focused on religious plurality and peace: *Love and Witness: Proclaiming the Peace of the Lord Jesus Christ in a Religiously Plural World*. The theme of the second is justice within and for creation: *Cultivate and Care: An Ecumenical Theology of Justice for and within Creation*.

(4) Nicaea 2025

Apart from these three main areas of work, it is worth noting that during its 2019 meeting in Nanjing, China, the Commission on Faith and Order decided to submit to the WCC Central Committee the proposal for a World Conference on Faith and Order to be held on the occasion of the 1700th anniversary of the first ecumenical council, which took place in Nicaea in 325.

The world conference could be the opportunity for the churches to harvest the fruits of ecumenical dialogue on the apostolic faith and to discern together the common challenges and common tasks related to the "tradition-ing" (handing on) of the faith in the different contexts of tomorrow's world.

Faith and Order publications since 1910, under the series name "Faith and Order Papers," are available online.[3]

C. Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The PCPCU and the WCC Commission on Faith and Order have collaborated since 1966 in the annual preparation of materials for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WPCU). The materials consist of a theme based on a scriptural reflection, an ecumenical service of common prayer, scriptural meditations for the eight days, and an account of the ecumenical situation in the region that prepared the materials.

The process is one in which the materials are first prepared by a nominated local ecumenical group chosen alternately by the PCPCU and the WCC. This draft is then revised in a meeting with an international team of experts nominated by the PCPCU and the WCC. The purpose of the revi-

3. https://archive.org/details/faithandorderpapersdigitaledition.

sion is always to ensure that the materials can be used and prayed as widely and by as many Christians as possible. In the final stage of the process, the materials are given back to the local churches for adaptation to local circumstances. In order for this to happen, the PCPCU and the WCC collaborate in the translation and preparation of the final agreed text and send it out to both the episcopal conferences of the RCC and the WCC member churches.

Both the PCPCU and the WCC are attentive to feedback concerning the materials for the WPCU. This feedback may be given spontaneously, but the PCPCU also receives feedback through the *ad limina* reports residential bishops make to the Holy Father every five years. If both the PCPCU and the WCC are agreed, such feedback may lead to an alteration to the guidelines that are given to the local ecumenical writing group when they are first invited to prepare the materials. Care is taken to ensure that materials are prepared by Christians from a variety of contexts and with diverse experiences.

In deference to the WCC assembly in 2022, the materials for the WPCU in 2021 were prepared by the sisters of the ecumenical community of Grandchamp (Switzerland) under the theme "Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit."

Topics of the WPCU for the years 2014–2022 have been:

2014: "Has Christ been divided?" (1 Cor. 1:1–17)
(Material from Canada—Preparatory meeting held in Montreal, Canada.)

2015: "Jesus said to her: 'Give me to drink'" (John 4:7)
(Material from Brazil—Preparatory meeting held in São Paulo, Brazil.)

2016: "Called to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord" (cf. 1 Pet. 2:9)
(Material from Latvia—Preparatory meeting held in Riga, Latvia.)

2017: "Reconciliation—The love of Christ compels us" (2 Cor. 5:14–20)
(Material from Germany—Preparatory meeting held in Wittenberg, Germany.)

2018: "Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power" (Ex. 15:6)
(Material from the Caribbean—Preparatory meeting held in Nassau, Bahamas.)

2019: "Justice and only justice you shall pursue" (Deut. 16:18–20)
(Material from Indonesia—Preparatory meeting held in Jakarta, Indonesia.)

2020 "They showed us unusual kindness" (Acts 28:2)
(Material from Malta—Preparatory meeting held in Rabat, Malta.)

2021 "Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit" (cf. John 15:8–9)
(Material from the community of Grandchamp—Preparatory meeting held in Grandchamp, Switzerland.)

2022 "We saw the star in the East, and we came to worship him"
(Matt. 2:2)
(Material prepared by the Middle East Council of Churches.)

D. Common witness: Mission and Evangelism

Ever since the WCC Conference on World Mission and Evangelism held in Athens in 2005, in which official Roman Catholic participants took part for the first time, the institutional relations between the RCC and the WCC Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) have been close and fruitful. The official administrative and institutional relations of mission and evangelism have been maintained and cherished by the PCPCU and the CWME.

When the new CWME commission set-up was created by the WCC Central Committee after the 10th Assembly in Busan in 2013, three Roman Catholic commissioners were officially nominated. They were: the Rev. Prof. Stephen B. Bevans, SVD, Catholic Theological Union (Chicago, USA); Fr Richard Nnyombi, Missionaries of Africa—White Fathers, Uganda; and Sr Mary John Kudiyirippil, Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit, Rome. All three represent various Catholic missionary organizations. Fr Nnyombi also serves as a member of the CWME executive group.

The fruitful cooperation for mission and unity was displayed in the preparations and implementation of the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism held in Arusha, Tanzania, in 2018. After the decision was taken by the WCC Central Committee to organize a Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in 2018 in Africa, the Roman Catholic commission members were fully involved in contributing to the success of the conference—and not only to preparations through the commission meetings (especially in the CWME meeting in Atlanta, USA, in 2017) but also to the implementation of the 2018 conference in Arusha. Fr Nnyombi and the Rev. Prof. Stephen B. Bevans were members of the conference planning committee while Sr Mary John Kudiyirippil was a member of the spiritual life committee. Among many

Roman Catholic contributions to the conference must be mentioned the coordination of the conference Bible studies by the Roman Catholic dean (2018–2021) of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, Fr. Prof. Dr Lawrence Iwuamadi, engaging as the Bible study coordinator of the conference. There was also an address on missional formation by Fr Nnyombi. The Rev. Prof. Stephen B. Bevans moderated the plenary session "Embracing the Cross." He also contributed to the post-conference publication *Called to Transforming Discipleship: Devotions from the World Council of Churches Conference on World Mission and Evangelism* (2019) as well as to the December 2018 issue of *International Review of Mission,* which focused on the conference.

The Roman Catholic contribution to and participation in the working of the ecumenical mission movement has not been limited to the CWME Catholic commissioners. For instance, during the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in Arusha in 2018, there was a message to the conference by Pope Francis himself through video as well as an address by the secretary of the PCPCU, Bishop Brian Farrell, who participated in the conference. The messages, as well as Fr Nnyombi's presentation, can be found in the conference report *Moving in the Spirit: Report of the World Council of Churches Conference on World Mission and Evangelism 2019*. The Roman Catholic participation in the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism in Arusha in 2018 was important and substantial, not least through an official delegation of some 20 people led by Bishop Farrell.

In 2016, the CWME Mission from the Margins desk and the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples (PCPCMIP), now the DPIHD, began an organic ecumenical collaboration on a joint response to the alarming rise in xenophobia and populism in the context of global migration that was sweeping across Europe, North America, and much of the rest of the globe. Recognizing that populism is an issue that needed deeper analysis, the partners agreed to host a symposium in December 2017 in Rome as a first step, with a view to organizing a world conference on the same theme in September 2018 with greater participation (i.e., the world conference "Xenophobia, Racism, and Populist Nationalism in the Context of Global Migration," in Rome; cf. this report section IV, A). The main goal was to explore how churches can give leadership in a unified effort to proactively address the growing fear directed at migrants and refugees, and to find constructive responses shaped by Christian spirituality and traditions of respect for human rights and human dignity. The world conference brought together governmental, intergovern-

mental, civil society, academic, religious, and ecumenical leaders and actors to seek cohesive and realistic responses to the named phenomenon.

The symposium in 2017 and the world conference in 2018 are good examples of the close ecumenical collaboration and working relationship between the CWME and the Holy See. The world conference in Rome in 2018 also included a private audience with Pope Francis, whose message raised up and added significant support for the conference statement.

In addition to the Commission and Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, another level of good working relations has been the journal *International Review of Mission*, published since 1912. Between 2013 (issue 2) and 2021 (issue 2), the missiological journal contained several articles written by Roman Catholic authors. The Rev. Prof. Stephen B. Bevans has been a member of the international board of advisors.

A third relational level is the mutual theological and missiological enrichment. While the WCC mission statement "Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes" (2013) includes features from the whole spectrum of the theological understanding of mission of the WCC member churches, it has features of modern Catholic understanding of mission as well. The document was adopted by the WCC Central Committee in 2012 and presented to the WCC member churches at the assembly in Busan in 2013.

E. Caring for creation, justice, and peace

Caring for our common home and promoting climate justice are key themes for the RCC and the WCC. From 2014 to 2021, key examples of collaboration in this critical area include:

- *Climate pilgrimages*

In the run-up to the 21st Conference of Parties (COP) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the WCC welcomed in Geneva Catholic pilgrims traveling from Rome to Paris.[4] Since then, the WCC has supported other pilgrimages to the COPs.

- *Season of Creation*

In 1989, 1 September was proclaimed as a day of prayer for the environment by Ecumenical Patriarch Dimitrios I. Since 2008, the WCC has been

4. "Climate Pilgrimage toward COP21 Pauses in Geneva," 5 November 2015, World Council of Churches, https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/climate-pilgrimage-toward-cop21-pauses-in-geneva.

observing a "Time for Creation" from 1 September to 4 October, and in 2015, Pope Francis designated 1 September as the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation for the worldwide RCC. Since 2016, the WCC has been jointly planning, preparing liturgical materials, and celebrating the Season of Creation[5] with the Laudato si' Movement, formerly the Global Catholic Climate Movement, and other partners.

- *Event on sustainable finance and care in the light of Laudato si', Rome, 15 April 2016*

Upon invitation of the RCC, the WCC, represented by the Rev. Henrik Grape together with a representative from the Ecumenical Patriarchate and Cardinal Turkson, jointly exchanged perspectives on the topic of sustainable finance and how finance must contribute to the attainment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

- *Conference "Laudato si' & Catholic Investing: Clean Energy for Our Common Home," 27 January 2017*

The WCC participated in the conference, sharing concrete examples of member churches—particularly the Church of Sweden—divesting from fossil fuels.

- *Interfaith Rainforest Initiative (IRI)*

The IRI—an international, multi-faith alliance that aims to bring moral urgency and faith-based leadership to global efforts to end tropical deforestation—was launched in 2017 in Oslo, with representation from the Holy See and the WCC as well as other faith groups. This is an ongoing project that continues to bring together WCC, Roman Catholic and partners from other faiths.

- *International conference on the 3rd anniversary of Laudato si': "Saving Our Common Home and the Future of Life on Earth," Vatican City, 5–6 July 2018*

The WCC was invited to participate in the conference, which was organized by the DPIHD to communicate above all a sense of deep urgency and profound concern for the precarious state of our common planetary home.

5. See https://seasonofcreation.org/.

- *Ecumenical prayer service for creation, Assisi, 31 August–1 September 2018*

The WCC contributed a reflection at the ecumenical event held in Assisi to celebrate the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation.[6]

- *UNFCCC COPs*

At the UN climate change conferences, the WCC advocates for climate justice, often in collaboration (through joint interfaith declarations and side events) with Roman Catholic organizations such as Caritas, the international network of Catholic social justice organisations CIDSE, Dominicans for Justice and Peace, and Franciscans International, among others.

At COP23 in Bonn, Germany, in 2017, the WCC together with the local Franciscan brothers developed and conducted the daily prayers during the climate change conference.

At COP24 in Katowice, Poland, in 2018, the WCC jointly planned and implemented together with the local Roman Catholic church an ecumenical service at the Cathedral of Christ the King. The WCC also jointly received Protestant and Catholic pilgrims in Katowice.

At COP25 in Madrid, Spain, in 2019, the WCC together with Dominicans for Justice and Peace and Franciscans International held a training session on climate change and human rights.

For COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland, in 2021, the heads of churches, leaders of other religious traditions, and eminent scientists prepared an appeal in a series of virtual discussions over a period of six months. They signed and presented the appeal to the COP26 president-designate at an in-person event in Rome on 4 October 2021 ahead of the climate change conference. The Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca, WCC Acting General Secretary, participated in the event.

6. See "Christian Leaders Demonstrate Growing Support for Environmental Protection," 30 August 2018, World Council of Churches, https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/christian-leaders-demonstrate-growing-support-for-environmental-protection, and "Assisi: On the Ecumenical Pilgrimage into a More Sustainable Future," 3 September 2018, World Council of Churches, https://www.oikoumene.org/news/assisi-on-the-ecumenical-pilgrimage-into-a-more-sustainable-future.

- *"Just Peace with Earth" conference, Kópavogur, 11–13 October 2017*

The WCC invited Roman Catholic participation and reflection on climate justice for the conference (Archbishop Peter Loy Chong of Fiji), producing a powerful message that quotes *Laudato si'*.[7]

- *SOFTE–WCC virtual conference "Rethinking Ecological Relationships in the Anthropocene Era," 11–13 February 2021*

Jointly organized by the WCC and the Ecumenical and Francophone Seminar on Theology of Ecology (SOFTE) based in the Catholic University of Lyon, the conference addressed questions such as how the human ascendancy over nature poses threats to the future of our planet and what are the implications for Christian theological reflection and action. Bishop Charles Morerod of Fribourg, Lausanne, and Geneva was one of the opening speakers.

F. Cooperation in ecumenical formation and with young people

In the Ninth Report, the JWG identified some prospects for the future (no. V). One of these was to seek ways in which the JWG could "continue to encourage better and growing ecumenical cooperation and participation of young people, for instance in universities and at occasions like the World Youth Day."[8]

The relationship between the RCC and the WCC between the WCC assemblies in Busan and Karlsruhe has seen increased collaboration in the area of ecumenical formation and with young people. The RCC reaffirmed its commitment to ecumenical formation at the WCC's Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, first by continuing to support the chair of Biblical Hermeneutics, which is held by a Roman Catholic scholar sponsored by the PCPCU. In 2016, when the mandate of the current Roman Catholic professor ended, the PCPCU renewed it for another period of five years as a sign of their commitment to ecumenical formation carried out at the institute. In January 2018, at the request of the faculty of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey and the WCC, the PCPCU accepted the appointment

7. "Final Message of the WCC Conference on Just Peace with Earth," 19 October 2017, World Council of Churches, https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/final-message-of-the-wcc-conference-on-just-peace-with-earth-iceland-october-2017.

8. JWG, *Ninth Report*, (Geneva: WCC Publication, 2013), 31.

of the Roman Catholic professor as the dean of the institute, making him the first Roman Catholic dean in the institute's history (between 2018-2021). This appointment highlights the growth of trust between the RCC and the WCC.

An important aspect of this collaboration is the continued commitment of the PCPCU to sponsoring formation at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey each year of two students belonging to the Eastern churches. This is a substantial contribution to ecumenical formation at the institute.

Similarly, the PCPCU continues to sponsor the yearly visit to Rome and the Vatican of the students and some faculty and staff of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey. It is difficult to overemphasize the importance of this visit, which allows students to understand the nature and structure of the RCC in a practical way and shows the commitment of the RCC to the ecumenical movement. Given the fact that due to the COVID-19 crisis in 2021 the visit was not possible, several videoconferences with different Dicasteries of the Roman Curia were organized for the students.

On the other hand, the WCC's Ecumenical Institute at Bossey has continued to encourage and support Roman Catholic students at the institute. The number of young Roman Catholics who came to study at Bossey shows the strengthened atmosphere of trust between the RCC and the WCC within this period. No less than 14 Roman Catholic students have taken part in either ecumenical or interreligious studies at the institute between 2013 and 2020.

The visit of Pope Francis to the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey on 21 June 2018, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the WCC, marked the highpoint of the partnership existing between the RCC and the WCC. The specific interest of the Pope in visiting the institute was a further demonstration of the fact that ecumenical formation and education of young people must be at the heart of the ecumenical movement.

Since the 70th anniversary celebration in 2018, the RCC and the WCC in their work with young people have been in a more intentional relationship for collaboration. The year 2018 marked several remarkable instances of collaboration between the Vatican and the WCC.

In March 2018, the Vatican held a pre-synodal youth meeting and consultation. Around 300 young people from around the world gathered, who represented the RCC or WCC member churches or were from other faiths or without faith affiliation. In addition, more than 15,000 young people

joined the conversation online and so participated in the final document entitled "Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment"[9] written by young people that was addressed to the synodal meeting in October of the same year.

The gathering brought together common themes and issues that young people today experience regardless of where they come from and what faith they belong to or do not belong to. The final document of the pre-synodal meeting produced details of the observations, challenges, and proposed solutions for the Church to consider in order to keep its prophetic voice in the world. In the document, the young people stated how the Church and its leaders are often disconnected from what is really happening in the world today, thus losing the young people's interest in staying in the Church. The final document was presented to Pope Francis at the end of the meeting. The same document is used in the WCC as a relevant resource to explore ways in which we can improve our work with young people today.

The WCC, through its youth engagement in the ecumenical movement; the World Methodist Council; the Lutheran World Federation the Anglican Communion; the Eastern Orthodox; and the Oriental Orthodox were among the onsite participants for the consultation. The WCC engagement in the consultation paved the way for a stronger network of young people in the Christian family and beyond.

Following the successful consultation on young people, the WCC had recommended the Rev. Martina Viktorie Kopecká, moderator of the WCC ECHOS Commission on Youth, to be its young delegate to the synod of bishops in Rome in October 2018. Her participation has opened another opportunity for closer collaboration. One of the positive results from the synodal meeting was a recommendation for the Vatican to nominate a young person to be a part of the ECHOS commission. This has been included in the provisionally approved by-laws of the commission (2021–2029 term) under "Membership: a commissioner (under 30 years old) representing the Roman Catholic Church" (final approval of the new by-laws is expected at the Central Committee in-person meeting in June 2022)."

9. 19–24 March 2018, General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops, http://secretariat.synod.va/content/synod2018/en/fede-discernimento-vocazione/final-document-of-the-synod-of-bishops-on-young-people--faith-an.html.

WCC programmes and activities with Roman Catholic participation

The WCC programmes and activities for and with young people have always been inclusive in its participants. As a transversal focus in the WCC structure, the project on Youth in the Ecumenical Movement has been working closely with different programmes and projects within the WCC. For instance, since it was launched in 2014 by the WCC office of Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation (IRDC) as a programme for young people between 20 and 35 years of age, YATRA or Young Adult Training in Religious Amity (previously known as Youth in Asia Training in Religious Amity) has been inviting young people from the RCC to be a part of the training course. For two consecutive years (2014 and 2015), YATRA was held at the Jesuit Refugee Service centre in Cambodia.[10] Since 2019, YATRA has been a collaborative programme between the WCC office of IRDC and the WCC project on Youth in the Ecumenical Movement.

Another example is the WCC eco-school. This is another collaborative programme within the WCC with focus on water, food, and climate justice—important topics that concern and affect young people. Since this is a very specific theme, participants come from different Christian traditions, not limited to WCC member churches, and young people from the RCC are welcome to be a part of the training.

In cooperation and mutual support, the WCC and the Focolare Movement serve together for justice and peace. Annually, there is a joint event on topics like migration and European values, the situation of migrants in Geneva, or the cooperation between faith-based groups and civil society. Every year, a group of students of the Centre of the Focolare Movement in Montet, Switzerland, visits the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva and the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey. At the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, the students of both institutions share their experiences of living and learning in a multicultural and multiconfessional context.

In 2022, the WCC will hold the Ecumenical Young Gathering (EYG) as part of the events leading up to the WCC 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe. The EYG will be held on 26–31 August 2022, bringing together young people from the WCC member churches and ecumenical partners. It is envisaged that the EYG will provide a youth-focused, open space for dialogue and consultation to strategize together a common agenda that will be brought forward to the assembly—to help better shape the ecumenical movement moving forward.

10. https://www.jrscambodia.org/Reflection_Centre/reflectioncentre.html

Conceptualizing, strategizing, organizing, and implementing the EYG is a group of 20 young people comprising the EYG design team. The design team represents the following: the WCC ECHOS Commission, the PCPCU, World YWCA, World YMCA, the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe, the World Student Christian Federation, the All Africa Conference of Churches, the Pacific Conference of Churches, the Global Christian Forum, the WCC Ecumenical Disability Advocacy Network, and the WCC Ecumenical Indigenous Peoples' Network; recommendations for representation are pending from the World Evangelical Alliance and Syndesmos, the global fellowship of Orthodox youth.

An important partner in the preparation for the upcoming WCC 11th Assembly in 2022 is the youth centre of the RCC in Karlsruhe. The centre has welcomed the proposal to hold different events for young people present at the assembly.

G. Interreligious dialogue and cooperation

The period 2014-2022 has been a time of significant and sustained growth for the relationship between the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (PCID) and the WCC office of Interreligious Dialogue and Cooperation (IRDC). Building on the longstanding relationship between the two offices, both cooperated with each other at multiple levels as they pursued the shared aim of fostering interreligious dialogue ecumenically.

Joint annual staff meetings

The practice of having joint annual meetings between staff of the two offices was resumed in 2014. Primarily intended to deepen the sense of fellowship and strengthen possibilities for programmatic collaboration, the following meetings have taken place since the WCC 10th Assembly—2014 (Geneva), 2015 (Rome), 2016 (Geneva), 2017 (Rome), 2018 (Geneva), 2019 (Rome), 2020 (Geneva).

Joint projects

The two offices also have a history of taking up joint projects on specific interreligious themes. Following this tradition, the two offices successfully published a joint document *Education for Peace in a Multi-Religious World: A Christian Perspective*. This document was launched at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva on 21 May 2019 during the seminar "Promoting Peace Together" that was attended by leaders of both bodies alongside representatives from

the diplomatic community in Geneva and representatives of different faiths. As part of their next joint project, the two offices decided to focus on the theme "Serving a Wounded World: Towards Interreligious Solidarity" and later agreed to expand their reflections on interreligious solidarity to include a focus on the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

***Commemorating the anniversary of the PCID and* Nostra Aetate**

Dr Clare Amos, the then WCC programme coordinator of IRDC participated in the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the PCID, on 19 May 2014. To mark the end of the 50th year of the publication of *Nostra Aetate* (the Second Vatican Council's seminal document on interreligious relations), the WCC organized a workshop on the th.eme "With Prudence and Love"—drawing on a key sentence from the document. The workshop, which acknowledged the importance of *Nostra Aetate* for Christian engagement in interreligious dialogue, formed part of a sequence of events that marked the formation of a newly created reference group for interreligious dialogue and cooperation in the WCC. The then under-secretary (now secretary) of the PCID, Mgr Indunil J. Kodithuwakku was nominated as a representative of the PCID to this reference group.

Expanding the scope of interreligious engagement

During the period 2013-2020, both bodies made concerted attempts to expand the scope of their interreligious engagement beyond existing religious partners and initiated new bilateral dialogues with the Taoists (PCID), Confucians (WCC), and Sikhs (WCC). As a concrete sign of growing mutuality, it became a practice for both the PCID and the WCC office of IRDC to invite relevant colleagues from the other body to the bilateral dialogues that each was organizing. Therefore, the Rev. Dr Peniel Rajkumar, the then WCC programme executive for IRDC (later programme coordinator) participated in the first and second Christian–Taoist colloquiums organized by the PCID in Taiwan (14–16 October 2016) and Singapore (4–8 November 2018), respectively. Similarly, Mgr Indunil J. Kodithuwakku, participated in the first Christian–Confucian dialogue organized by the WCC in the Republic of Korea on 27-31 October 2017. In 2019, the newly elected president of the PCID, then Bishop (now Cardinal) Miguel Ayuso Guixot and Mgr Santiago Michael (PCID staff responsible for relations with Sikhs) took part in the first Christian-Sikh dialogue organized by the WCC in Geneva on 5 July, which commemorated the 550th anniversary of the birth of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism.

Other instances of mutual participation

Staff from the WCC were involved in activities organized by the PCID and vice versa at other instances. These include the following:

- Mgr Indunil J. Kodithuwakku took part in a meeting organized by the WCC at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey to produce a study guide on the relationship between intra-Christian and interreligious dialogue (21-23 March 2015).
- The Rev. Dr Peniel Rajkumar joined the PCID on a visit to Singapore with Bishop Miguel Ayuso Guixot and Mgr Indunil J. Kodituwakku (10–12 October 2015).
- Fr Markus Solo from the PCID participated in the "Walking Together" event organized by the WCC to reflect on pilgrimage sites as areas of conflict and sources of peace, held in Cyprus (6-8 December 2016).
- Mgr Indunil J. Kodithuwakku participated in the interfaith symposium on statelessness organized by the WCC along with UNHCR, in Rome (7-8 December 2017).
- Mgr Indunil J. Kodithuwakku and the Rev. Dr Peniel Rajkumar participated in various Christian-Buddhist dialogues organized by the two parent bodies, including the following:
- the consultation on Anglican-Lutheran–Buddhist relations co-organized by the WCC in Yangon, Myanmar (16–20 January 2017)
- the Sixth Buddhist-Christian Colloquium of the PCID held in Taiwan (13–16 November 2017)
- the consultation on issues in Christian-Buddhist relations organized by the WCC in Geneva (25–27 November 2018)
- the conference "Buddhist-Christian Encounter—A Visionary Approach," co-organized by the WCC in St Ottilien, Germany (26 June–1 July 2019)
- The Rev. Dr David Marshall, WCC programme executive, was invited to join the Vatican delegation's visit to Tehran, Iran, on 9-15 November 2019.

- At the invitation of the Pontifical Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies (PISAI), the Rev. Dr David Marshall taught a course in Rome in December 2018 and 2019.
- Dr Clare Amos participated in the 12th plenary assembly of the PCID held in June 2017 in Rome.
- The Rev. Dr Simone Sinn participated in the first international Buddhist-Christian dialogue for nuns, entitled "Contemplative Action and Active Contemplation," organized by the PCID at Fo Guang Shan Buddhist Monastery, in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, on 13-20 October 2018.

These examples of mutual collaboration testify to the deepening of trust, respect, and friendship between staff of the two bodies.

Passing of Cardinal Tauran

During this period, the WCC also mourned the passing of Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, the late president of the PCID, who died on 5 July 2018. His commitment to the mutual flourishing of all through peaceful coexistence and his manifold contributions toward strengthening the relationship between the PCID and the WCC are a legacy that will be treasured in the years to come. We recall with gratitude his erudite leadership of the PCID.

New leadership of the PCID

Following the demise of Cardinal Tauran, the then secretary of the PCID, Bishop Miguel Ayuso Guixot, was appointed president of the PCID and subsequently nominated as cardinal by Pope Francis, in recognition of his dedicated and distinguished work in the field of interreligious relations. On 3 July 2019, Mgr Indunil J. Kodithuwakku, the then under-secretary of the PCID, was appointed as secretary of the PCID. This was followed by the appointment of Fr Paulin Batairwa Kubuya as under-secretary of the PCID in November 2019.

Building further on what has been achieved so far, the PCID and the WCC look forward to fruitful collaboration in exploring afresh how interreligious engagement can become a creative and concrete means of justice and peace in the world today in order to 'pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding' (Rom. 14:19).

V. Members of the Joint Working Group (2014–2022)

RCC MEMBERS

CO-MODERATOR
The Most Rev. Diarmuid Martin
Archbishop Emeritus of Dublin, Ireland

CO-SECRETARY
The Rev. Dr Andrzej Choromański
Official of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity for Relations with the World Council of Churches

The Rev. Dr John Crossin, OSFS
Director of Spiritual Formation at Saint Luke Institute, Brisson Hall

WCC MEMBERS

CO-MODERATOR
H.E. Metropolitan and Archbishop Nifon
Metropolitan and Archbishop of Târgoviște, Romania

CO-SECRETARY
The Rev. Dr Martin Robra (until 2019)
WCC Programme Director for the WCC and the Ecumenical Movement i n the 21st Century

CO-SECRETARY
The Prof. Dr Vasile-Octavian Mihoc
(since 2019)
WCC Programme Executive for Ecumenical Relations and Faith and Order
Professor at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey

The Rev. Ofelia Alvarez Coleman
Presbyter of the Moravian Church in Nicaragua

RCC MEMBERS

The Most Rev. Brian Farrell
Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

The Rev. Mons. Dr Indunil J. Kodithuwakku
Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue

The Prof. Dr Annemarie Mayer
Associate Professor at the Catholic University of Leuven
The Prof. Dr Teresa Francesca Rossi
Associate Director of Centro Pro Unione Professor of Ecumenism at the Pontifical University St Thomas Aquinas and Pontifical Atheneum St Anselm, Rome

The Rev. Mons. Dr Juan Usma Gómez
Head of the Western Section of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

The Most Rev. Rodolfo Valenzuela Núñez
Bishop of Verapaz

The Rev. Mons. Robinson Wijesinghe
(until November 2017)
Director of the Office of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development

WCC MEMBERS

The Rev. Michel Charbonnier
Pastor of the Methodist Church of Bologna and Modena

The Rev. Prof. Dr Kondothra M. George
Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
Principal of the Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam
Co-Chairperson and Professor at the Federated Faculty for Research in Religion and Culture, Kerala

The Rev. Canon Dr Olivia Nassaka Banja
Senior Lecturer and Director of Teaching and Learning at Uganda Christian University
Church of Uganda (Anglican)

The Prof. Dr Friederike Nüssel
Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD)
Professor of Systematic Theology and Ecumenical Studies at Heidelberg University Member of the Churches in Dialogue Commission of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and of the EKD Advisory Commission on Theology and Issues of Faith

The Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca
(until 2020)
Acting General Secretary of the WCC
Director of the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey

RCC MEMBERS

The Rev. Fabio Baggio, CS (from November 2017 until July 2019)
Under–Secretary of the Migrants and Refugees Section, Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development

Ms Silvana Salvati
Project Assistant

WCC MEMBERS

The Rev. Prof. Dr Odair Pedroso Mateus
Interim Deputy General Secretary of the WCC
Director of Faith and Order

The Rev. Robina Marie Winbush (+March 12, 2019)
Associate Stated Clerk and Director of Ecumenical Relations, Presbyterian Church (USA)

The Rev. Dr Karen Georgia A. Thompson (since 2019)
Associate General Minister of Global Engagement of the United Church of Christ

Ms Lurdes Teixteira (until 2019)
Project Assistant

VI. Appendices

Study documents with recommendations to the churches

1. Peace Is a Treasure for All: An Ecumenical Reflection on Peacebuilding in Situations of Conflict and Violence

2. Migrants and Refugees: Ecumenical Challenges and Opportunities

Peace Is a Treasure for All: An Ecumenical Reflection on Peacebuilding in Situations of Conflict and Violence

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Introduction

"Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21).[1] The risen Lord sends his disciples today into a broken world overwhelmed by despair and frustration, oppression and violence. The Lord sends Christians as peacebuilders to be agents of healing and reconciliation. This mission requires Christians to engage with one another, with the followers of other religions, and with all people of goodwill.

What is the particular role of churches and Christians as peacebuilders in situations of conflict and violence? What are the ecumenical challenges and opportunities involved in working together for peace? The Joint Working Group (JWG), as an instrument that was instituted to foster greater coopera-

1. Biblical quotes are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) unless otherwise indicated.

tion between the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Roman Catholic Church (RCC), seeks to encourage its parent bodies to intensify their collaboration in practical peacebuilding efforts. This work is based on the theological, pastoral, and ethical reflections on peacebuilding as expressed in the documents of the WCC and the RCC.[2]

It is a shared Christian conviction that the quest for peace involves many levels of action. Indeed, the search for peace includes the dimensions of prevention, protection, and mediation. It requires a culture committed to fostering peace. Christians are called to be co-workers in God's mission of building a culture of peace that permeates all of church life and mission.[3] This mission includes a commitment to ecumenical, interreligious, and intercultural dialogue, and practical cooperation for justice and peace.

In addressing peacebuilding in situations of conflict and violence, the JWG considers the impact of culture, religion, and dialogue. We recognize that culture and religion cannot be clearly separated—in fact, the relationship and interactions between them are complex. Nevertheless, we first ask what peace is from the perspectives of *culture, religion,* and *dialogue*. We continue by reflecting on what threatens peace from these same three vantage points. We had planned to conclude by asking what contributes to peace from these three perspectives, but in view of the COVID-19 crisis, we add reflections on the social and political impacts of the pandemic that seriously affect international peace and security. Finally, we formulate recommendations to the parent bodies. Our text and recommendations will consider carefully the nexus between individual, social, and political responsibilities.

1. What is peace?

Culture

In the understanding of the JWG, human beings are totally immersed in culture. Cultures function as basic textures of societies. Expressed in symbols, rituals, myths, architecture, music, the arts, language, literature, sciences, sociality, economics, political orders, philosophies, religious traditions, and

2. World Council of Churches, *Just Peace Companion*, 2nd ed. (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2012), 19ff; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004), https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html.

3. See PCJP, *Compendium*, §488–96, and WCC, *Just Peace Companion,* 26–28.

theologies, cultures manifest a threefold relationship of the human person: with the cosmos and the earth, with other members of society, and with the transcendent and the divine. In this sense, cultures are the context in which peacebuilding takes place.

Peacebuilding is a central issue in local, regional, and global contexts. Peace flourishes and enhances life under conditions of truth, justice, love, and freedom. Even though there may be no single definition of peace, people across cultures share a desire for peace. Peace entails more than the absence of war, violence, oppression, and persecution. It requires a common vision of a life of dignity and wellbeing for all. The recognition of human dignity involves respect for, and understanding of, others and is grounded in the affirmation of their value as human beings, along with a commitment to values such as justice, solidarity, compassion, and mutual acceptance.

Religion

Peace is rooted in values and virtues stemming from convictions and practices th.at in many cases are rooted in religious beliefs. Christians find in the Bible that peace is intimately related to justice, truth, and mercy. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. 85:10–11, KJV). Peace is the fruit of justice (Is. 32:17), the shalom of all creation (Is. 65:17–25). It is a precondition for the fullness of life (John 10:10). Jesus declares, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matt. 5:9). Jesus proclaims the reign of God as a realm of peace, and justice and peace as essential for the children of God.

As the body of Christ and community of believers, the Church is entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18). This ministry is directed toward peace, and it requires an emphasis on distributive and restorative justice (Neh. 5:1–13; Matt. 5:23–24; Rev. 22:1–3).

According to the Christian understanding, peace starts with God's intention for peace, the recognition of sin, and the need for reconciliation with God as well as with one's fellow creatures and the entire creation. Christian spirituality places a significant emphasis on inner peace, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit and which is important for dialogue and mediation. Inner peace is also a factor in discerning God's will for effective action in the world (Rom. 8:38–39; Gal. 5:22–23; John 14:16,26; 15:26; Rom. 12:2).

The RCC and the WCC agree in their understanding of peace as being bound to the recognition of human dignity and equality. For both bodies, social justice and social development are essential conditions for human

flourishing in peaceful relationships. For example, in the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, Pope Francis states:

> Peace in society cannot be understood as pacification or the mere absence of violence resulting from the domination of one part of society over others. [...] Demands involving the distribution of wealth, concern for the poor and human rights cannot be suppressed under the guise of creating a consensus on paper or a transient peace for a contented minority. The dignity of the human person and the common good rank higher than the comfort of those who refuse to renounce their privileges. When these values are threatened, a prophetic voice must be raised. [...] In the end, a peace which is not the result of integral development will be doomed; it will always spawn new conflicts and various forms of violence.[4]

The WCC also highlights these essential conditions in *An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace*[5]—for example, in "Let the Scriptures speak," paragraph 3:

> The Bible makes justice the inseparable companion of peace (Isaiah 32:17; James 3:18). Both point to right and sustainable relationships in human society, the vitality of our connections with the earth, the "well-being" and integrity of creation. Peace is God's gift to a broken but beloved world, today as in the lifetime of Jesus Christ: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you." (John 14:27). Through the life and teachings, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we perceive peace as both promise and present—a hope for the future and a gift here and now.

And in "The way of just peace," paragraph 11:

> Within the limitations of tongue and intellect, we propose that Just Peace may be comprehended as a collective and dynamic yet grounded

4. Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii gaudium of the Holy Father Francis to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2013), 218–19, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html.

5. World Council of Churches, *An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace*, (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2011), 2–4, https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/ecumenical-call-to-just-peace.

> process of freeing human beings from fear and want, of overcoming enmity, discrimination and oppression, and of establishing conditions for just relationships that privilege the experience of the most vulnerable and respect the integrity of creation.

It is commonly recognized that just peace includes care for the whole creation. Thus, peacebuilding involves joint engagement for the preservation and restoration of integral ecosystems. The WCC states:

> Peace is an embrace of all creation. Our relations with God, with one another and with the earth are not based on the pursuit of interest or arbitrary choice. They are the bonds of love. In Jesus Christ, who is our peace (Eph. 2:14), God has entered the world, knows our brokenness, embraces our vulnerability, and is reconciling all things in himself (Col. 1:19-20). As created in the image of God and thus participating in the divine communion, human beings have the potential to build peace and overcome violence. They are called to act as mediators and "priests of creation" co-operating with God in resisting the forces of death and destruction. [...] Glory to God (*doxa*) is manifested in the building (*praxis*) of peace.[6]

In a similar way, in *Laudato si'* Pope Francis argues as follows:

> "Peace, justice and the preservation of creation are three absolutely interconnected themes, which cannot be separated and treated individually without once again falling into reductionism." Everything is related and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth.[7]

Christians believe that peace is God's gift. Bonds of love with one another and with all of creation are rooted in Christ. Christians pray that the Holy

6. WCC, *Just Peace Companion*, 25-26.

7. Pope Francis, *Encyclical Letter Laudato si of the Holy Father Francis on Care for Our Common Home* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015), 92. This reference cites *Pastoral Letter Sobre la relación del hombre con la naturaleza* of the Conference of Dominican Bishops (21 January 1987).

Spirit may guide them as they pursue justice and integral human development for the common good of all societies and for humanity as a whole. By treasuring this gift and building peace, Christians give glory to God.

Dialogue

Dialogue is fundamental to human communication and community. As such, it is a vital resource for mutual recognition and relationships. Dialogue is an encounter that requires us to be open to and respectful of the diversity, dignity, and integrity of the other and of ourselves. Dialogue also creates the framework for taking common action to overcome structural injustice. Successful, authentic dialogue can facilitate peace by promoting understanding, creating the conditions for reconciliation, and preventing conflict and hostility.

Christians engage in dialogue because of their call to witness to the reign of God in an imperfect world. This commitment leads Christians to respond to the gospel imperatives of loving their neighbours, rejecting violence, and seeking justice for all—especially for the poor, the disinherited, and the oppressed (Matt. 5:1–12; Luke 4:18). To build just and sustainable societies, the contributions of Christians, followers of other religions, and all people of goodwill are necessary.

From the perspective of dialogue, peacebuilding is inclusive and acknowledges the validity of voices that are often excluded from the dialogue table. Diversity at the dialogue table also helps us to understand the complexity of the peace process itself. A constructive process of encounter and dialogue is essential to the peacebuilding process. Such a dialogue process includes:

- sharing stories of suffering and pain caused by conflict and oppression
- gaining a shared understanding of the causes of conflict and the need for healing
- addressing the asymmetries of power and structure
- identifying misunderstandings and prejudices in order to explore convergences and divergences
- discerning the voice and work of the Spirit in order to reconcile and heal memories
- developing a new shared narrative for living together in peace

The churches are called to play a peacebuilding role in situations of conflict and violence, and in post-conflict reconciliation processes. Churches have been involved in peacebuilding processes in a range of conflicts and can draw on these experiences.[8] Dialogue is critical in prevention, mediation, and reconciliation. Some ecumenical dialogues between the churches provide models of how to overcome enmity and develop a new narrative that enables Christians to build lasting peace through relationships with one another.[9]

2. What threatens peace?

Culture

Major cultural phenomena such as globalization, mass media, and migration have the potential to threaten peace. Political boundaries are often redrawn to coincide with cultural identities—of race, ethnicity, caste, class, language, nation, and religion. Alliances and divisions can arise within and across cultures. As a result, cultural conflicts arise even within a society. In many cases, power structures, geopolitical competitions, and the wounding of colonialism and neo-colonialism are at the root of violence and war.[10] Interference with local conflicts by those with power for geopolitical interests undermines communities and leads to further violence and war. Women, children, and vulnerable groups are disproportionally affected.

Cultures all over the globe are influenced, if not shaped, in positive or negative ways by the processes of globalization.[11] Globalization of solidarity

8. These include for example: Cuba, Venezuela, Colombia, Mozambique, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Central African Republic, and the Korean peninsula.

9. See, for example, *Healing Memories: Reconciling in Christ. Report of the Lutheran–Mennonite International Study Commission* (Geneva: The Lutheran World Federation; Strasbourg: Mennonite World Conference, 2010); The Lutheran World Federation and The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, *From Conflict to Communion: Lutheran–Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017. Report of the Lutheran–Roman Catholic Commission on Unity* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt; Paderborn: Bonifatius, 2013).

10. Peacebuilders need to consider the unique history of their region as they strive to build bridges. This is beyond the scope of this text.

11. "Mondialization" is another word that refers to this phenomenon but with a positive connotation, cf. World Council of Churches Justice, Peace, and Creation Team, *Alternative Globalization Addressing Peoples and Earth* (*AGAPE*): *A Background Document* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2005), 1, note 1, https://www.oikoumene.org/sites/default/files/Document/agape-new.pdf.

and interdependence needs to be strengthened; globalization of indifference, individualism, consumerism, and exploitation needs to be challenged. Economic globalization has major effects in terms of just or unjust social conditions between and within societies. The recognition of interdependence requires a renewed vision of international solidarity. Globalization triggers localization and "glocalization" that require discernment to determine which values are to be promoted in the given context at a particular time.

Models of globalization in which few profit and many are exploited, excluded and marginalized create new dimensions of polarization. "Such an economy kills."[12] Globalization as it operates today leads to increased insecurity in several spheres—wealth, health, environment, and politics. These insecurities sow the seeds of, and exacerbate, social and cultural conflicts. New forms of protectionism give rise to greater exclusion and inequality, with consequences at the local, regional, and global levels. The process of globalization and resulting insecurities can lead to cultural domination, exclusion, and even annihilation (as, for example, the annihilation of Indigenous cultures). Affirming one's own identity while negating others' identities threatens justice and peace in society. This happens, for example, when historical injustices and wounds are not recognized due to a biased retelling of history.

People who claim identities with exclusive privileges and access to power that simultaneously deny the humanity and rights of others attempt to create closed systems. This claim lays the foundation for fanaticism and extreme conflicts between people and groups. When cultural and political institutions are unable or unwilling to meet the needs of all people, protect the dignity of humanity, and care for creation, conflicts within and between cultures will arise.

Social media have added a completely new dimension to the way in which news is disseminated and accessed. While they offer fast and easy access to information around the world and enable increased awareness of issues and participation in the exchange of information, they also create the possibil-

12. Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, 53; cf. also Pope John Paul II: "Globalization must not be a new version of colonialism. It must respect the diversity of cultures, which, within the universal harmony of peoples, are life's interpretive keys. In particular, it must not deprive the poor of what remains most precious to them, including their religious beliefs and practices." In "Address of the Holy Father to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences" (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2001), 27 April 2001, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2001/april/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20010427_pc-social-sciences.html.

ity of journalism that is not accountable, that manipulates, and that fosters uncritical acceptance and the expectation of immediate solutions to complex problems. Particular media bias toward conflict and division has become part of globalized cultures. Increased access to media outlets and social media can feed hate speech and exclusion.

With growing interdependence and immediacy of information, the awareness of the phenomenon of migration has substantially increased.[13] The movement of migrants is often a result of the absence of peace. Migrants bring their skills and gifts, enriching their host communities; some, however, also bring their prejudices, divisions, and conflicts, making integration more difficult. Due to the influx of international migrants, most countries are becoming more multicultural, multi-ethnic, multireligious, and multilingual.

To sustain peace, it is vital that host communities protect, promote, and integrate migrants. In this way, people help to build a culture of inclusion and generosity. Migrants are often perceived as a threat to wealth and security, and are highly vulnerable to xenophobia, racism, and discrimination. Thus, the challenge before us is to foster a culture of respect for human dignity in every situation, in place of a culture of exclusion.

Overall, violent non-state actors such as terrorist groups or ethnic militias have significantly increased and with them, violence and war within societies and states. Too often, nations choose the way of violence and war as a response to conflict within and between cultures. Militarization, the arms trade, and nuclear proliferation are the most visible examples of such responses and constitute extreme threats to peace.

Religion

Some ideologies and institutions have at times appropriated and co-opted religious rhetoric to serve their own interests. This leads to tensions and violence under the false presumption of religious commitment. Sometimes, secular ideologies and institutions also seek to isolate or deny religious freedom. They may even argue that religion itself is problematic and that society would be better off without it. This exclusive approach in itself can lead to conflict and violence.

Although religions have contributed significantly to positive social change in accordance with their visions and values, such as those reflected in

13. See the accompanying JWG study document *Migrants and Refugees: Ecumenical Challenges and Opportunities*.

the Golden Rule of Christianity or the Eightfold Path of Buddhism, history has shown that adherents of religions have also helped to fuel conflicts. The core teachings and intentions of most religions are for the good of humanity and creation; nevertheless, they can be perverted and used to justify acts of violence. Virtually every major religious tradition has served as an inspiration for peacemakers, yet virtually every one has also at times allowed itself to be instrumentalized for acts of violence resulting in exclusion. Such violence can be seen, for example, in caste discrimination, and in majoritarian nationalism influenced by religion and culture. Some religious fundamentalists may believe themselves to be living in extraordinary times of crisis, danger, or apocalyptic doom. The manipulation of this sense of urgency can be used as justification for violence and even war. Such abuse is instigated by those who search for an accumulation of power through religion.

The instrumentalization of religion can occur in manifold ways, all of which have the potential to threaten peace. For example, such instrumentalization may

- encourage a sense of exclusive belonging to a privileged community that sometimes fosters prejudice, discrimination, and even violence against those who do not share membership in the same community;
- oversimplify and manipulate symbols, myths, and narratives;
- promote the sacralization of politics by using religious beliefs to seek political power and justify political conflict;
- denigrate other religions, and enable disrespect and desecration of any object, belief, goal, or action that is perceived as sacred by others;
- seek to proselytize (unethically convert), violating a comprehensive understanding of religious freedom and respect of conscience;
- provide the foundation for violent interaction between adherents of different religions or ideologies;
- impose religious rules and behaviour that are likely to provoke violence if another group perceives them as threatening.

All these examples are perversions of religion.

Dialogue

Communication and socialization are inherent to human beings. Consequently, dialogue is perceived as a positive process for resolving conflicts and building peace. Mutual respect, the willingness to both listen and speak, and

sincerity are preconditions for dialogue. In conflict, all stakeholders need to be involved in the peacebuilding dialogue. If not all are invited or not all come as willing participants, dialogue will not achieve its intended goal and could possibly increase existing tensions. Dialogue can be a threat to peace if adequate time is not invested in building relationships and if it is not representative of all parties or becomes an encounter of privileged elites.

Whenever dialogue is conducted within authoritarian structures and with power-oriented attitudes, it is rendered ineffective. If honesty and transparency are lacking, dialogue can be manipulated for ulterior motives, leading to a breakdown of relationships and the exacerbation of conflict. This also is the case if dialogue is misused to defend the status quo of division and prevent the development of a new, shared narrative. Although dialogue requires the affirmation of one's identity, any claims of an exclusive identity can jeopardize peace. All dialogue partners must be open and willing to find common ground and shared interests.

3. What contributes to peacebuilding?

Culture

Each culture has resources to contribute to peace. Peace is sustained when different cultures respect each other. It is important to explore the manifold factors that promote a culture of peace and to analyze their complex entanglements and interactions. These factors are: respect for life and human dignity, a sense of community, equality and inclusive participation, hospitality, the value of family, contemplation, simplicity and humility, care for the earth as our common home, a commitment to the common good, and the desire for reconciliation. If these values are to be maintained, they must be transmitted from one generation to the next.

Another important step toward a culture of peace is the globalization of solidarity. Solidarity is a key virtue. It can be defined as "a *firm and persevering determination* to commit oneself to the *common good*."[14] Peace is the fruit of solidarity.[15] Therefore, it is important to reflect broadly on, and enhance, cultural resources that can promote peace, especially through education and the media. A culture of peace also depends on political and legal justice and their imple-

14. See Pope John Paul II, *Compendium*, 192–196, with definition at 193.

15. See Manfred Rottländer, "Solidarity" in Nicholas Lossky et al., eds., Dictionary of the *Ecumenical Movement*, 2nd ed. (Geneva: World Council of Churches 2002), 1057–58.

mentation, including safety in daily life, shelter, employment, and food security. It is essential to find ways in which globalization promotes these conditions.

There are many examples of faith-based peacebuilding initiatives. The following contemporary examples, among others, show how religions speak to the wider cultural context of peacebuilding:

- The World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi, started by Pope John Paul II in 1986, has developed over the years into a clear signal to the world that it is necessary and possible to build solidarity between Christian religious leaders, leaders of other religions and representatives of non-believing groups. It offers a model and spiritual framework for creating one humanity united in peace. The Assisi experience has inspired followers of other religions, especially Buddhists, to promote peace through prayer, e.g., in the Religious Summit Meeting on Mount Hiei, Kyoto, Japan, that started in 1987.
- Since 2013 the WCC's Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace has promoted collaborative efforts among all people of goodwill to consider their own spiritual journey and "to join together with others in celebrating life and in concrete steps toward transforming injustices and violence."[16]
- The Marrakesh Declaration (2016) marked a historic step in raising awareness for the globalization of solidarity in the Muslim world. More than 250 Muslim leaders affirmed that cooperation "must go beyond mutual tolerance and respect, to providing full protection for the rights and liberties to all religious groups in a civilized manner that eschews coercion, bias, and arrogance."[17]
- The Abu Dhabi *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* (2019) is a landmark document for promoting peace. It was signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Al-Tayyib, and endorsed by other religious leaders.[18] "It is a document that invites

16. "Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace," World Council of Churches website, at: https://www.oikoumene.org/what-we-do/pilgrimage-justice-and-peace.

17. "Executive Summary of the Marrakesh Declaration on the Rights of Religious Minorities in Predominantly Muslim Majority Communities," 27 January 2016, http://www.marrakeshdeclaration.org/files/bismilah-2-eng.pdf.

18. Pope Francis, *A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2019), https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/papa-francesco_20190204_documento-fratellanza-umana.html.

> all persons who have faith in God and faith in *human fraternity* to unite and work together so that it may serve as a guide for future generations to advance a culture of mutual respect in the awareness of the great divine grace that makes all human beings brothers and sisters."[19]

The goal of these and many other efforts is the globalization of solidarity between individuals, groups, cultures, religions, and societies. This globalization requires a capacity and an openness to learn from each other and to develop a deeper and more comprehensive personal and social solidarity. The context and horizon of the globalization of solidarity is the unity of humankind and all creation. Therefore, such efforts involve not only Christians, but people of other faiths— indeed, all people of goodwill.

Moreover, critique and debate alone do not suffice to foster peacebuilding. It is essential for cultures to offer education on the values that will enable people to treat others as they themselves want to be treated. Mass media, provision of up-to-date and honest information, and programmes of formation all have a role to play in this educational process. People need to be made aware of best practices for building peace with justice. In this educational process it is important to reflect broadly on, and enhance, cultural resources that can promote peace.

Religion

Many religions aspire to a state of peace for society at large as well as for the individual. Some religions, such as Jainism, Hinduism, and Buddhism, deeply believe in nonviolence toward all living beings, not only toward our fellow human beings. Gandhi, drawing on these religious sources, used the principle of *ahimsa*, or nonviolence, in the long struggle for freedom from colonial rule. For him, *ahimsa* shared common ground with the Sermon on the Mount. The same principle of nonviolence that inspired Gandhi was invoked as a method of transformation by Martin Luther King Jr. during the civil rights

19. Pope Francis, *Document on Human Fraternity,* Introduction. Along similar lines, His All Holiness Bartholomeos, The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, addressed the Muslim Council of Elders' Global Peace Conference in Cairo in 2017, stressing, "This is the biggest challenge for religions: to develop their own potentials of love, solidarity, and compassion. That is what humanity deeply expects from religion today." In: His All Holiness Bartholomeos, "Religions and Peace," Address of His-All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholemew (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2017), https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/other-meetings/religions-and-peace-address-of-his-all-holiness-ecumenical-patriarch-bartholomew.

movement in the USA. More recently, in Liberia, Leymah Roberta Gbowee was the organizer of an interfaith women's movement that contributed to the end of the civil war by nonviolent action.

To prepare themselves better for cooperation with people of other faiths and of goodwill, Christians need to be deeply rooted in their own tradition. This leads Christians to read their sacred scriptures with attentiveness to Jesus' teaching on peace and just relationships.[20] Understanding Jesus' ministry and message in the context of the Roman Empire informs the discipleship of Christians as peacebuilders.

The Beatitudes offer a Christian matrix of radically reordered relationships based on repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation (Matt. 5:1–12; Luke 6:20–26). Throughout his ministry Jesus was constantly breaking down social barriers, for example, barriers with the Samaritans, the Canaanite woman, or the people who were deemed unclean.

Prior to his passion, Jesus said to his disciples: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid" (John 14:27). Although a peacemaker and healer, Jesus became a victim of violence, but he overcame the evil of hatred and the power of death on the cross and in the resurrection. The risen Christ affirmed this gift of peace through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (cf. John 20:21–22). The Holy Spirit empowered the disciples to continue Jesus' ministry of healing and peacebuilding as a transformed and transforming community (cf. Acts 2ff.).

The Spirit has the power to disrupt all systems or conditions of oppression and violence, and to reconcile broken relationships. This movement in the Holy Spirit deepens intra-Christian relationships, and it equips Christians for solidarity and mutual accountability with people of other faiths.[21] Christians must readily admit that they still need to *continue* to build peace

20. See Pope Paul VI, *Dei Verbum* (Vatican City: The Vatican, 1965), especially chapters V and VI, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html; and *A Treasure in Earthen Vessels: An Instrument for an Ecumenical Reflection on Hermeneutics*, Faith and Order Paper No. 182 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1998), at: https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/a-treasure-in-earthen-vessels-an-instrument-for-an-ecumenical-reflection-on-hermeneutics.

21. See, for example, "Young Peacemakers, Christian and Muslim, Meet Religious Leaders during UK Forum," 18 July 2018, World Council of Churches website, at: https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/young-peacemakers-christian-and-muslim-meet-religious-leaders-during-uk-forum.

among themselves while seeking to work for peace in the world. Reconciliation among Christians has been the primary concern of the ecumenical movement since its beginning. This also leads to common action with many others in society, strengthening the political will to build peace.

Despite deplorable violence in church history, there have been saints and communities that have lived faithfully according to the gospel. Their examples remind us of the cost of obedience and witness to the peace of Christ. Faithfulness to the cause of peace can lead to sacrifices. Today, there are Christian martyrs among peacebuilders. While not the only goal of discipleship, martyrdom is the most radical form of *martyria*, of witnessing to Christ.

Future generations face new challenges and possibilities for peacebuilding, for which they need to be equipped. Continuing education for peace must be a priority in every context. Peace education has the potential to overcome mutual ignorance and prejudices, to build bridges, to teach a truthful interpretation of the sacred books and of history, and thus to prevent violence.[22] The need to learn about others can be even more urgent and more difficult in places where there is a history of isolation or conflict.

The core message of Christianity includes repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation, expressed in specific rituals. There is much to rediscover in liturgical traditions. These institutionalized forms allow groups and individuals to recognize evil and forms of behaviour that damage social cohesion. They offer a reliable framework for renewal, reconciled encounter, and mutual accountability. From the peacebuilding perspective, rituals can spiritually support and teach—for example, by

- marking the resolution to repent and change (*metanoia*);
- uprooting the causes of conflict;
- building bridges through dialogue;
- seeking justice and being a prophetic and healing voice for victims and survivors;
- being a healing voice toward the wrongdoers as well.

22. The JWG recommends for study: Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and World Council of Churches, *Education for Peace in a Multi-Religious World: A Christian Perspective* (Vatican City: PCID; Geneva: WCC Publications, 2019), https://www.pcinterreligious.org/education-for-peace-in-a-multi-religious-world.

Dialogue

Dialogue is essential for peacebuilding and reconciliation. Dialogue, built on mutual respect and trust, always leads to deeper understanding and acceptance of one another. Through dialogue, people and communities of different religions living side by side have sought to build peaceful relations and to share their experience with others. The most important tasks of dialogue are to explore convergences and divergences, to overcome prejudices, to explain mutuality, to understand essential convictions and practices, and to define common tasks and goals on the basis of mutual respect and understanding.

At different levels of conflict, different strategies are needed. The healing of memories is important for healing the wounds of conflicts and nurturing reconciliation. It is also critical in preventing future conflicts. One of the ways in which the healing of memories can be achieved is through ecumenical dialogues that include repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation, restitution, and restorative justice, so that the churches can walk into the future together. New relationships can only be built through a dialogue that includes transformative action.

Friendship and hospitality at the level of individuals and communities play an important role in facilitating dialogue and promoting common action for peace. Processes leading to sustainable peace need the involvement of actors representing the different dimensions of life and society—social, economic, environmental, political, cultural, and religious—in a multi-stakeholder dialogue. Opportunities for dialogues for peacebuilding are to be seriously considered, independent of who the initiators or facilitators are.

Intra-Christian and interfaith dialogues have several dimensions: a dialogue of life, a dialogue of action, a dialogue of theological exchange, and a dialogue of religious experience.[23]

There are situations and conditions that require a third party to initiate and facilitate a dialogue. Churches can be a catalyst or a host for bringing people together. They need to realize their convening power and are encour-

23. World Council of Churches, *Called to Dialogue: Interreligious and Intra-Christian Dialogue in Ecumenical Conversation: A Practical Guide* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2016), 7, https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-programmes/interreligious-dialogue-and-cooperation/called-to-dialogue; and Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, "Reflection and Orientations on Interreligious Dialogue and the Proclamation of The Gospel of Jesus Christ (1)," in *Dialogue and Proclamation* 42, 19 May 1991, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_doc_19051991_dialogue-and-proclamatio_en.html.

aged to facilitate this role even in minority situations. Churches have been involved in peace processes, publicly or confidentially, all over the world. It is an example of best practice that both the WCC (with consultative status) and the Holy See (as permanent observer) are represented at the United Nations.

The JWG is a body that uses dialogue and reflection when it meets. The study produced by the JWG on *The Nature and Purpose of Ecumenical Dialogue*[24] points to the basic dialogical dimension of human life and, indeed, of Christian faith in the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Under its present mandate, the JWG is, on the one hand, expressing concern about increasing situations of conflict and violence in the world and, on the other, pointing to signs of hope.

There is no alternative to dialogue. Peace is a treasure for all.

4. What challenges for peacebuilding have been caused by the COVID-19 pandemic?

The world is experiencing new threats posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. International peace and security are seriously affected, and global public health faces unprecedented challenges. These challenges are increasing socio-economic inequality and discrimination while revealing political vulnerabilities and deepening the erosion of trust in public institutions. The crisis presents a degree of complexity that makes it vital to act and work in a synergetic and coordinated way, and to discover new forms of solidarity.

One important task of religious actors is to affirm the value of the human person and his or her wholeness in the face of stigmatization, isolation, and digitalization. The rise of poverty associated with the loss of jobs in the entire world due to the pandemic is generating the recrudescence of inequalities and injustice, including gender inequality, deepening the gaps between rich and poor, and affluent and less affluent societies. Furthermore, economic insecurity and concerns for public health represent major risk factors for the building and maintaining of peaceful relations between the members of communities.

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24. Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, *Eighth Report* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2005), 73–89, https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/jwg-rcc-wcc/eight-report-of-the-joint-working-group. See also Jeffrey Gros, Thomas F. Best, and Lorelei F. Fuchs, eds., *Growth in Agreement III: International Dialogue Texts and Agreed Statements, 1998–2005,* Faith and Order Paper No. 204 (Geneva: WCC Publications; Grand Rapids, USA/Cambridge, UK: Williams Eerdmans Publishing, 2008) 587-604.

Preventing conflicts, and healing those affected by conflicts, requires a new awareness of our interconnectedness. Even in their brokenness and fragility, each member of our human family has the potential to restart a process of reconciliation. Created in the image of the God of peace, every person bears a responsibility for preserving and promoting continuous mutual understanding in communities and striving for harmony and consensus. Christ's peace given to the world, the source of healing of conflicts at all levels, requires the human effort to participate in the transformation of the world into a faithful image of the kingdom of justice, compassion, and love, so that the world might see the presence of God among people.

In the context of the current multidimensional challenges, the most vulnerable are the conflict-affected and post-conflict countries. The sustained contribution of faith actors and communities is crucial in preventing conflicts and mediating strife, and in the post-conflict rebuilding of peaceful coexistence. On different levels—social, ecumenical, and interreligious—these actors should link practical grassroots initiatives with global processes in fulfilling their call as peacemakers.

Peacebuilding recommendations from the JWG to the RCC and the WCC

Reflecting on the increasing number of conflicts in our world and the possibility that the pandemic might increase conflicts, we offer the following recommendations as the practical conclusions of our dialogue on peacebuilding.

The JWG is convinced that for peacebuilding all Christians ought to

- affirm together that working for peace is both their common Christian calling and their common journey;
- strengthen their shared commitment to peacebuilding through prophetic witness in the public sphere;
- advocate jointly for a biblical, holistic understanding of peace;
- acknowledge with humility that cultures and religions are affected by human brokenness;
- foster reconciliation through justice, repentance, forgiveness, mutual understanding, and the overcoming of prejudice;
- utilize together a century of official ecumenical dialogues between churches as a model for conflict resolution and the healing of memories;
- discover together approaches to peacebuilding in the spiritual and moral sources of other religions;

- delegitimize violence perpetrated in the name of religion;
- oppose fundamentalism, religious extremism, and inhuman globalization;
- collaborate with all actors— faith-based and civil-society organizations, NGOs, governments, and law enforcement organizations— that share the same goals and concerns.

Therefore, the JWG recommends that the WCC and the RCC promote and support the following actions at all levels.

At the international level, the RCC and the WCC should

- encourage episcopal conferences, councils of churches, and regional ecumenical organizations to establish goals and programmes of peacebuilding;
- update each other regularly about areas of crisis and the possibilities of common action;
- encourage joint peace education, which would include equipping their members to engage together in the work of peace and peacebuilding, for example, by disseminating the publication *Education for Peace in a Multi-Religious World: A Christian Perspective*[25];
- work theologically on moral and ethical formation that takes peace and justice as a hermeneutical lens for reading sacred texts;
- be open to involvement in the support and protection of peacemakers as risk-takers;
- promote simple and eco-friendly ways of life that temper the effects of consumerism;
- advocate together for durable diplomatic and political solutions in situations affected by conflicts and violence.

At the national and regional levels, the WCC and the RCC should encourage national councils of churches, bishops' conferences, and regional ecumenical organizations to

- identify and support the specific role of Christians as peacebuilders in the prevention and solution of conflicts;

25. A co-publication of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the World Council of Churches (Vatican City: PCID; Geneva: WCC Publications, 2019).

- support the protection of peacemakers as risk-takers;
- advocate to bring the stories of victims and survivors, especially those of women and children, to the negotiating table so that the non-elites are listened to;
- address all dynamics of superiority and inferiority that affect peacebuilding processes;
- cooperate with all the actors of social and political life in elaborating durable and peaceful solutions;
- establish appropriate means for promoting peace—for instance, through the
- establishment of joint, permanent ecumenical peace commissions. Such commissions could act on the recommendations made in this document, as appropriate to their contexts and cultures. Their long-term goals could be: to prevent and de-escalate conflicts from the very beginning, and to work toward a restorative justice that reconciles victims and survivors, offenders, and members of the community with each other.

At the grassroots level, the RCC and the WCC should encourage congregations and parishes, and church-based educational institutions, in collaboration with local peacebuilding initiatives, to

- pray for peace, especially on occasions such as the World Day of Peace, and reflect and act to protect "our common home";
- gather the stories of victims and survivors, especially those of women and children, to ensure they inform the peacebuilding process;
- enhance awareness of local peace processes, involving mass media and joint visits to the areas of conflict;
- promote advocacy together with local institutions;
- promote and encourage cultural and artistic initiatives that foster an environment of peace;
- help to establish channels of communication between key actors in conflict zones;
- develop initiatives to support vulnerable populations, especially women, children, and families, in situations of conflict and violence;
- offer safe spaces for truth telling and trauma healing;

- collaborate with educational institutions to provide materials that discourage violence and hatred, such as indicated in the publication *Education for Peace in a Multi-Religious World*.

Peacebuilding recommendations for meeting challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic

Peacebuilders are in a unique position to forge pathways for trust, exchange of information, and collaboration, assessing systemic injustices exacerbated by pandemics. Therefore, to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, the JWG additionally recommends the following strategies.

At the international level, the WCC and the RCC should

- make international communities more sensitive to the need for peace during the dire time of coping with the pandemic, for example, Pope Francis' repeated calls for a worldwide ceasefire[26];
- encourage social and medical solidarity, especially with those countries, communities, and ethnic groups most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, as a measure to prevent conflict at all levels;
- promote a language of peace and collaboration in the face of fragile hope and local tensions, and offer an alternative vision of integral human development, solidarity, and security.

At the national and regional levels, the RCC and the WCC should encourage national councils of churches, bishops' conferences, and regional ecumenical organizations to

- build church networks and support teams in which best practices are shared by trained volunteers who can build channels of assistance and support;

26. See "Angelus: Pope Appeals for Global Ceasefire amid Covid Pandemic," 29 March 2020, *Vatican News*, https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-03/angelus-pope-appeals-for-global-ceasefire-amid-covid-pandemic.html; "Pope: Implement Global Ceasefire Effectively and Promptly," 5 July 2020, *Vatican News*, https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-07/pope-implement-global-ceasefire-effectively-and-promptly.html; "Pope Reiterates Appeal for Global Ceasefire, Calls for Peace in the Caucasus," 19 July 2020, *Vatican News*, https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-07/pope-appeal-global-ceasefire-pandemic-violence-caucasus.html.

- collaborate with humanitarian NGOs and contribute to their social work by building joint support groups for countering the pandemic and for working for justice and peace;
- promote fact-based information on the virus to counter conspiracy theories.

At the grassroots level, the WCC and the RCC should encourage congregations and parishes, and church-based educational institutions, along with local peacebuilding initiatives, to

- organize church services and pastoral care in a manner that is conducive to coping with COVID-19 while at the same time doing justice to the spiritual needs of all the faithful and reducing possible tensions and frustrations;
- help counter fearful panic by sharing good practices and positive stories, with pastoral care for all afflicted.

Migrants and Refugees: Ecumenical Challenges and Opportunities

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me." (Matt 25:35)

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A letter to our readers

Dear reader,

Migration is an issue of serious concern in contemporary societies throughout the world. As you read this letter, thousands, often against their will, and at the risk of their lives, are on the move in search of survival or a better life for themselves and their families. Their already precarious condition has been recently aggravated by the unexpected outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had an immediate impact on the global community. The crisis has dramatically altered everyone's daily life and revealed false securities. It has impacted the whole human family, causing untold physical, psychological, and spiritual suffering, and the escalation of widespread fear, panic, injustice, disillusionment, instability. At the same time, it has revived the sense that we are a global community and that only by caring for each other and working together can we overcome any crisis, present or future. As Christians, we consider that this is a time for implementing new forms of solidarity with the most vulnerable members of our society.

For this reason, members of the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches decided to focus on ecumenical cooperation in the context of migration. We are convinced that for the Christian churches, joining hands in caring for migrants is imperative for the witness to the gospel.

This text has three aims. The first is to offer biblical, theological, and practical reflections as references for discernment and action on the challenges of migration. This is necessary at a time when public debate about migrants is marked by prejudices, stereotypes, intolerance, and the misuse of religious identities.

The second aim is to identify opportunities for Christian communities to welcome, protect, promote, and integrate migrants. In the Old Testament and in Jesus' practice and teaching, compassion for the most vulnerable is a sign of faithfulness to God's covenant with the people whom God brought out of oppression in Egypt.

The third aim is to provide specific recommendations concerning ecumenical cooperation on migrant issues in the hope that by praying together, walking together, and working together on these issues, Christians from different churches will experience the blessings of strengthening their fellowship.

As co-moderators, we give thanks to God for the witness of Christians, Christian communities, and people of other faiths or no faith who are already

involved in the protection of migrants. We invite individual Christians, churches, and ecumenical groups to read and discuss this document and to consider the possibilities of undertaking and fostering ecumenical initiatives in response to the challenges and opportunities presented by migration. We pray and hope that this text will inspire you and other Christians to experience greater and more genuine communion in the practice of solidarity.

"Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it" (Heb. 13:2).

His Excellency Diarmuid Martin
Archbishop Emeritus of Dublin

His Eminence Nifon
Metropolitan and Archbishop
of Târgoviște

1. The signs we see

Thousands of refugees have drowned in the Mediterranean Sea, hundreds of thousands of Rohingya people are fleeing from Myanmar to Bangladesh, thousands again are on the move from Central America to the North and are being pushed back at the borders of the USA, people from South Sudan seek refuge in Uganda, and millions are being displaced by war and violence in Ukraine, Syria, Yemen, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. These and many more examples can be given where people are trying to escape violence and war, especially in the Middle East. Additionally, there are millions of internally displaced people in Ukraine, Iraq, Colombia, and Sudan. Forced migration is one of the most dehumanizing realities of our contemporary world. Yet, voluntary migration is not without risks, betrayed hopes, and disappointments. Many struggle to find the daily means for survival, families are separated, and young people are losing identity and hope. All this we lament.

Given their multiple and complex causes, current migration flows escape rigid and easy categorizations of any kind. Thus, the term "migrant" should be understood in a comprehensive way. It includes a varied range of categories of people such as migrant workers, asylum seekers and refugees, internally displaced people, and victims/survivors of human trafficking. This comprehensive definition of the term contributes to highlighting the fact that migration in the age of globalization has multiple and cross-cutting dimensions.

Recently, the already precarious situation of people on the move has significantly deteriorated due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has significantly impacted the life of the entire human family. In the face of this

global crisis, migrants are more vulnerable than others due to personal, social, and situational factors. Restrictive measures introduced by civil authorities to flatten the curve of infections have greatly affected mobility and migration. Procedures for processing and providing assistance to asylum seekers have been slowed down, and several countries have closed their borders entirely to foreigners. The majority of migrants are in developing countries and living in overcrowded environments with limited or no access to medical care. Restrictions on movement and feelings of social isolation that are now also being experienced generally in societies worldwide provide an insight into the daily struggles faced by migrants around the world. All this we lament.

1.1 We lament:

- that people are often forced to migrate because of economic inequalities and exploitation; poverty; injustice; corruption; dictatorships; armed conflicts; religious, political, and ethnic persecutions; unfavourable climatic conditions; human trafficking; and self-serving politics.
- the social and economic disparities in the world, within and among regions, that expose how wealth is enjoyed by the few to the detriment of the many and ultimately how people are deprived of opportunities to lead fulfilling lives. These disparities contribute to the conditions that are causing migration globally.
- that in some developing countries the governmental and economic forces fail to address and even exacerbate the conditions that force people to seek a better life by migrating.
- the dehumanization that often characterizes migration. Vulnerable migrants are often exploited in countries of origin, transit, and arrival, particularly by criminal organizations. Women are often driven into exploitative relationships and dehumanizing employment. Young women and children are often trafficked and abused for economic profit.
- that the public perception of migrants is often misguided by toxic narratives, fears, and an over-emphasis on the need for protection and security. This impinges on how migrants are regarded by receiving societies, often resulting in indifference, suspicion, and rejection. Such negative attitudes are frequently translated by policymakers into

restrictive migration laws, closure of borders, or unjustified enforcement of practices that reject migrants.

- the misuse of religious identities and the exploitation of fear for political purposes. In many countries, growing discrimination, racism, and xenophobia have been anchored by political parties and movements in subtle, sometimes also open and violent, manifestations of ethnic or religious prejudices against migrants.
- the right to migrate internally and internationally has been deeply affected by the pandemic crisis to the point that some governments and public authorities use the pandemic crisis as an argument for limiting or blocking the right to migrate internally and internationally. They refuse due humanitarian assistance to people on the move in terms of ensuring dignified conditions of life, access to proper protection, and healthcare, in particular in the case of irregular migrants. Fake news, misinformation, and politicization of migration issues as a means of alienating migrants and refugees contributes to their stigmatization and to the dissemination of prejudices that tend to be pervasive in times of uncertainty and anxiety. Such tendencies can also entail long–term consequences for migrants' integration and social cohesion.

1.2 We affirm

- that, as societies become increasingly pluralistic, forums for intercultural dialogue between migrants and receiving communities have been created in many contexts, in which mutual understanding and respect can grow. Fear and prejudice are best addressed and overcome by coming together, so that people can become acquainted, learn about one another, and share their stories.
- that migration is an occasion for deeper encounters and exchange of life-affirming values and practices. Historically, migration has proved to be an opportunity for mutual enrichment and care. Migrants of all faiths can share their religious experiences and the richness of their traditions. Christian migrants can contribute, with their spirituality, to broaden the understanding of how the gospel is announced and lived out in receiving communities. In many countries, this has led to positive changes in the ecclesial landscape and in the way of being Christian communities in multicultural settings.

- that migration provides potential opportunities for education and capacity building. Reciprocal understanding and integration, with a view to full participation in the life of society, are fostered through formal and informal educational initiatives. Learning and capacity development also constitute a propitious avenue to building peace and addressing stereotyping.
- that migration offers an opportunity for nurturing relationships marked by mutual respect and learning, and for honouring the commitments of all those who are engaged in fostering value-based practices of listening to and caring for one another.
- that migrants contribute to the integral development of both receiving and home societies. Such contributions generate a new sense of belonging across national and ethnic borders. The acknowledgment and sharing of the diverse forms of cultural and religious wealth result in a real human enrichment by nurturing sentiments of fraternity and attitudes of mutual solidarity.
- that all initiatives addressing migration—ranging from forums of discussion to humanitarian assistance—be supported by a wide spectrum of institutional and civil society actors, churches, and religious communities, which serve the purpose of promoting solidarity, integration, and cohesion among all people as well as caring for the most vulnerable.
- that in the time of pandemic, all migrants should have access to response measures including health and social protection, regardless of their migratory status. All initiatives undertaken by civil authorities, as well as humanitarian and faith–based organizations, focusing on helping migrants during the pandemic are to be supported.
- that the worldwide pandemic constitutes a deep crisis in human relations in general that even exacerbates the new pastoral challenges and opportunities for our churches and for ecumenical relations, a crisis to which we are called to respond together. We encourage Christian communities and in particular local congregations to strengthen their cooperation in response to the COVID-19 crisis and to work together with other social actors toward recovery, social cohesion, peace, security, and development.

2. The vision we share

2.1 Understanding migration

Migration is an enduring feature of human history and is a particular sign of our times. The phenomenon brings to mind not only the idea of spatial mobility and displacement but—due to the interplay of cultural, political, social, and religious aspects—also implies the continuous redefinition of borders and identities. Although migration may be the result of a free choice, it is often driven by external circumstances.

Being a migrant is one of the deepest existential contemporary experiences, mirroring the ambivalences of modern societies. Migrants live in the existential tension between the past—represented by the life left behind in the country of origin, their family, their culture, and roots,—and the new future they intend to build in a different and unfamiliar place, one that can sometimes even be hostile. Positively, migration can indicate the reality of global mobility and the attainment of freedom. Negatively, it reveals the vulnerability people experience when they are exposed to conditions that compel them to seek protection and security outside their homeland.

2.2 A faith perspective

The signs we see move us to express before God our pain over loss, separation, and affliction as well as our hopes and prayers that these tears, sufferings, and injustices will not have the last word but that the God of life is at work through the Spirit, creating opportunities for encounter, dialogue, understanding, enrichment, and care, and leading all human beings—migrants and host-communities—to a transformed life. Therefore, as people of faith, in continuity with the biblical tradition, we place both our laments and our affirmations before God.

For the people of God, migration has been an ambivalent journey between blessing and curse, an attainment of freedom and belonging as well as an experience of injustice and loss. The biblical narrative of the people of God starts with a "wandering Aramean" (Deut. 26:5, NRSV; cf. Gen. 12:1–2; Ps. 105; 106). The identity of Israel is built upon the remembrance and ethical consequences of their own migration experience (Lev. 19:33–34; 24:22). Resonating throughout the Old Testament is the commandment to defend orphans, widows, and foreigners. According to the prophets, the fidelity of the people to God's covenant is shown in caring for foreigners and those in need.

Jesus—who was born in a manger (Luke 2:6–7) and forced to flee into Egypt (Matt. 2:13–15), where he was a foreigner—sums up and repeats in his own life the basic experience of God's people in the Old Testament. Itinerancy and sojourning were essential features of Jesus' life and ministry (Luke 9:58; Matt. 9:35).

The paschal mystery of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the saving event of all humanity. Jesus dies for all humanity without reservation, condition, or difference. This both inspires and challenges us to open our hearts to the other without restriction. The Church, born out of Pentecost, in fulfilment of the paschal mystery, is a real encounter of people that leads the apostle Paul to declare, "In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!" (Col. 3:11). Following this example opens the doors of our hearts to the Holy Trinity, which is the model of undivided and unreserved love and charity toward the other.

Biblical narratives of migration help to shape vividly the understanding that all people are strangers and sojourners, who have no enduring city but are looking for the city that is to come (Heb. 13:14). Being a pilgrim people is therefore a mark of the Church. The Church's itinerancy is instrumental to fulfilling its mission to witness to God's lasting love for the world. It is also a call for unity: inviting all people of faith and goodwill to discover that no social boundaries, political status, or national identity can supersede the shared longing for justice and the belonging to the one human family for whom God cares eternally.[1]

The complexity of the phenomenon of migration requires an all-embracing attention and care at all levels by all people; Christians in particular are called to offer a common vision based on the values of the kingdom of God as expressed in the Bible. From a Christian perspective, migration has to be viewed from the perspective of an ever-present God, intervening in human history with signs of continuous love and compassion; in this sense, migration touches the inner core of Christian self-understanding and tradition.

All men and women are created in God's image, yet each is unique and unrepeatable: "So God created humankind in his own image, in the image of

1. See PCJP, *Compendium*, 428–430; Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004), 101–102; World Council of Churches, *The "Other" Is My Neighbour: Developing an Ecumenical Response to Migration* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2013), 20–21.

God he created them; male and female he created them" (Gen 1:27). Their uniqueness is tangibly manifested in their consciousness and freedom, which constitute the very ground of their human dignity. Such dignity is inviolable, and its integral promotion represents the paramount value of every political, economic, social, scientific, and cultural exercise. Human beings can never be a "means" to reach a "goal" that is different from their personal and integral fulfilment. Any attempt to dim their divine image or violate their consciousness and freedom is evil.[2]

By stating this, churches recognize and honour the dignity of all migrants, regardless of their religious affiliation, in order to foster the values of the Kingdom of God on this earth as well as to give an effective witness to the world as Christians, members of the one body of Christ, who has reconciled all human beings to God.

In the face of the migrant reality, the mission of the Church is necessarily love, mercy, and charity. God's mercy gives rise to joyful gratitude for the hope that opens up before us in the mystery of our redemption by Christ's blood. Mercy nourishes and strengthens solidarity toward others as a necessary response to God's gracious love, which "has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (Rom 5:5). All of us are responsible for our neighbour: we are keepers of our brothers and sisters no matter where they live.

3. The principles we uphold

This Christian vision informs attitudes, principles, and values of consideration and care for those who are vulnerable due to migration. At the same time, it provides opportunities for common engagement to transform unjust structures and to advocate for rights while growing in our personal journey toward the conformation of our lives to Christ. Our common attempt to read the signs of the times in an age of migration means keeping this memory alive and translating it into the life and witness of the Church through principles that we uphold and actions that we promote.

We offer these principles to Christian communities for reflection and discernment at all levels. They may be helpful to give direction for analysis and action in response to the opportunities and challenges of migration.

2. See PCJP, *Compendium*, 132–134; WCC, *The "Other,"* 8–11; "Theological Consultation on Affirming Human Dignity, Rights of Peoples and the Integrity of Creation: Aide Memoire," 1 June 2005, World Council of Churches Commission on Faith and Order, at: https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/affirming-human-dignity-rights-of-peoples-and-the-integrity-of-creation-rwanda-2004.

3.1 Sanctity of life

"Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). The sanctity of human life, grounded in such a mysterious indwelling, implies that life should be valued, defended, and cared for in all its forms, from its beginning to its end.[3]

3.2 Human dignity and human rights

"God shows no partiality" (Acts 10:34). All human beings are made in God's image and likeness, and their dignity is equal. Therefore, as Christians, we are called to uphold human rights as universal, inviolable, and inalienable. Guaranteeing the human rights of migrants requires their full integration into the receiving societies. Such integration is a two-way process that envisages mutual respect for the human dignity of newcomers and hosting communities alike. Therefore, both are invited to be responsible for the integral human development of all of society and all people.

3.3 Universal destination of goods and care for creation

"Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food" (Gen 1:29). God the Creator gave all the goods of the earth to the whole of humanity for the sustenance of all its members, without exclusion or exception. Such universal destination of the world's goods grounds the right of all human beings to have access to the goods that are deemed necessary for their integral development. The actual exercise of these rights demands that everyone undertake to care for all of creation, now and for future generations.

3.4 Common good and distributive justice

"All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need" (Acts 2:44–45). The concept of the common good invokes a set of conditions that allow the members of a society to achieve their integral fulfilment both as individuals and as a group. Access to the common good should be regulated by distributive justice, which assures to each one what justly belongs to them, aiming at overcoming inequalities. The application of this principle

3. See John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995), 2; "WCC's Intervention at the UN World Conference on Population and Development," 5–13 September 1994, World Council of Churches.

to wider human groups and the whole of humanity constitutes the ground for social and global justice. Thus, migration might become a matter of choice where individuals are migrating for reasons other than war or violence.

3.5 Welcoming Christ in the newcomer

"I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matt. 25:35). Welcoming the stranger is much more than a duty. In the newcomer, a Christian sees not simply a neighbour. Every stranger knocking at the door offers an opportunity to meet Jesus Christ himself, asking us to show our love for God through love for our neighbour: "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did to me" (Matt. 25:04). By loving and serving the "other," we encounter God, the "totally Other."

4. The actions we take

In response to the signs we see, inspired by the vision we share, and guided by the principles we uphold, as Christians we recognize our specific responsibility to ensure that migrants are welcomed, protected, promoted and integrated.[4] We are aware that the phenomenon of migration links practically every part of the world, involving the political community, civil society, and faith-based communities. The challenges posed by this phenomenon demand a coordinated, effective, and immediate response by the churches, societies, and states as well as the international community.

4.1 Welcoming

A prophetic concern

We observe with concern the radicalization of the debate on reception and integration, between acceptance and refusal, solidarity and closed borders, political negotiations and military interventions, immediate support and repatriation. "Welcoming" means enlarging the size of our tent (cf. Is. 54:2), accepting and showing genuine interest in the person. Integral to that welcome is the inclusion of people from different economic backgrounds, ethnic groups, gender, nationalities, generations, and abilities. Unjustified exclusions created throughout human history need to be healed. Welcoming fulfils the

4. Cf. Pope Francis, "Message for the 104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees" (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2018), 14 January 2018.

prophetic dimension of the nature and mission of the Church, called to be a sign of the unity between God and humankind.[5]

We recommend

- that concrete actions be taken to offer migrants broader options to enter destinations safely and legally (i.e., regular pathways for safe and voluntary migration and resettlement; community sponsorship programmes; humanitarian corridors; family reunification programmes; student visas). Arbitrary or collective expulsion of migrants must be proscribed, and the principle of non-refoulement[6] should always be upheld.[7]
- that churches prepare the receiving communities and promote an attitude of welcoming, solidarity, and charity.
- that care be taken to cultivate attitudes of listening, understanding, recognizing, and respecting the socio-cultural diversity of others, promoting cultural and religious dialogue with patience and respect, and finding adequate means to speak to the fears and despair that are shared by migrants and residents, as well as those that distinguish them.[8]
- that churches offer migrants decent and appropriate shelter, with the assurance of basic daily services and access to health systems without discrimination until they are either helped to settle in the host country or to return to their native lands on their own, as they desire.

5. Pope Paul VI, *Lumen gentium* (Vatican City: The Vatican, 1964) §1; *The Church: Towards a Common Vision*, Faith and Order Paper No. 213 (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2013), §25-27, at: https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/the-church-towards-a-common-vision.

6. The principle of non-refoulement is a principle of international law that guarantees that no one be returned to a country where he [she] would face torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and other irreparable harm on account of his [her] race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion (cf. 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Article 33 §1, at: https://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10).

7. "Responding to Refugees and Migrants: Twenty Pastoral Action Points," Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, §2, https://migrants-refugees.va/20-action-points-migrants/.

8. See World Council of Churches et al., "Have No Fear," 20 June 2016, at: https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/have-no-fear.

- that churches provide safe spaces and opportunities to hear migrants' stories and narratives. These can be life-giving spaces of truth telling, healing relationships, and reconciliation processes.
- that small-scale programmes of welcome and reception offered by national governments and international organizations be implemented as well, in several contexts they have proved to be much more favourable to promoting better personal encounter and greater quality of service and success.[9]

In response to the spirit of welcoming and hospitality extended by hosting communities, migrants are called to respect the receiving communities by way of understanding their traditions, cultures, laws, and religious life. Local Christian communities are in a favourable position to promote and facilitate such an attitude.

4.2 Protecting

A prophetic concern

We observe with concern that migrants are often exposed to exploitation, abuse, and violence. Human trafficking thrives on unsafe passages of transit. Separation of families in transition often paves the way for violence against young girls and women. Protecting migrants means saving their lives, defending their rights and dignity, and ensuring their fundamental freedom regardless of their legal status. In the face of the challenges of contemporary migration, the prophetic task of churches includes advocating for better protection of those most vulnerable and empowering them to speak up against human rights violations, and monitoring and assessing the fairness and moral consistency of public policies and legal practices.

We recommend

- that churches engage in providing migrants with education—in particular, language education—and resources to enable them to defend their rights.
- that churches launch advocacy campaigns in favour of migrants' rights and dignity in partnership with institutions, academia, media, the private sector, and civil society actors.

9. Cf. Pope Francis, "Address to the Participants in the International Forum on Migration and Peace" (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2017), 21 February 2017.

- that churches offer migrants—especially those who cannot easily approach proper legal structures due to their particular circumstances—legal assistance regardless of their legal status and advocate for the adoption of clear and relevant juridical instruments, both national and international, against all forms of injustices and criminal activity targeting migrants.
- that churches advocate for a more balanced sharing of responsibilities among countries in terms of assistance, relocation, resettlement, and family reunification, acknowledging the need for special protection of refugees and forcibly displaced persons.

Migrants also are called to cooperate actively in the protection of the most vulnerable in the receiving societies and to become neighbours to all those who are suffering and in need.

4.3 Promoting

A prophetic concern

We observe that, besides welcoming and protecting, there is the need to promote the integral human development of migrants during the process of integration. Promoting means making all necessary efforts to ensure their empowerment to achieve their potential as human beings in all dimensions. It is a process that leads to the vitality and health of the whole community as it involves everyone taking responsibility for building a healthy and peaceful society. It requires everyone to promote social interaction and cooperation with people of different backgrounds and to be good neighbours at home, at church, at work, and at school. The prophetic task of the churches in this regard is to highlight the potential for common development that can be unleashed through the encounter of people—migrants and locals—providing spaces and opportunities for the authentic expression and sharing of each one's identity and richness. Since we recognize that the relational dimension is foundational in our existence, we affirm that the other's growth results in our own growth.

We recommend

that churches create conducive environments so that migrants are provided with every opportunity to achieve their integral development. This implies ensuring equal access to healthcare, education, work, and justice and religious services as well as the enhancement of migrants' choices and the opportunity to pursue their legitimate aspirations.

- that churches proactively nurture cohesive and peaceful communities by organizing capacity-building and awareness-raising seminars, study groups, retreats, and other initiatives as well as by holding multicultural celebrations and festivals that bring people together in joyful mutual sharing.
- Migrants are also called to exercise their best capacities and energies for the integral development of all, contributing to the common good of the receiving societies. Finally, they are encouraged to develop creative ways of assisting and benefitting their communities of origin.

4.4 Integrating

A prophetic concern

We observe with concern growing attitudes of intolerance, indifference, discrimination, xenophobia, hate speech, and racism. There is a need to create and foster integrated communities whose ultimate manifestation is a peaceful, just, and sustainable society.

Integration—which is not the same as assimilation—is an intentional and constant process involving mutual learning, understanding, and appreciation of every person's socio-cultural and religious identity. This meeting of cultures demands patience, awareness, overcoming stereotypes and prejudices, and trustful dialogue of life and faith. Churches are encouraged to sustain dialogue with those inside and outside of the Church who reject migrants in their communities, never compromising the value of human dignity. The prophetic task of the Church is to stand as a sign of communion and unity, fulfilling God's design of making all one and recapitulating all things in Christ (cf. John 17:21; Eph. 1:10).

We recommend

- that churches make integration a priority by educating their members and communities, and by allocating resources for specialized training and equipping of church leaders and members for this task. The establishment of a dedicated office or department within the church might be a useful tool in achieving this objective.
- that churches advocate for employment opportunities and assist migrants in accessing employment services.
- that churches assist migrants and receiving communities in the process of integration, seeking harmony and cohesion while upholding

their cultural and religious values. This kind of assistance will promote full integration of migrants in hosting communities, thereby minimalizing exclusion and ghettoization.

- that churches include migrants in conflict resolution, peacebuilding processes, and mediation to support reconciliation in home and host communities.

Migrants are also called to assume conscientiously their obligations in reference to the receiving community, respecting its dignity and identity as well as preserving its material, cultural, and religious heritage; obeying and abiding by national and territorial laws; and contributing to the common good.

5. Churches working together

5.1 Consolidating ecumenical assistance

We acknowledge and rejoice that, in different parts of the world, churches are involved in fruitful ecumenical cooperation assisting migrants. In particular we celebrate the enriching contribution made by migrant churches, itinerant and diaspora communities, to ecumenical encounter, and to the life of the local churches and societies. We recognize our call to strengthen ecumenical cooperation as a way to:

- serve the credibility of the witness of Christian faith and vision;
- strengthen the effectiveness and the scope of our action as churches;
- grow in fellowship toward visible unity as Christians.

5.2 The ways of cooperation

All recommendations under the four headings—welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating—should be undertaken ecumenically as much as possible. Moreover, there are specific actions we recommend to episcopal conferences, councils of churches, and ecumenical organizations:

- invite Christian scholars and researchers to reflect jointly upon the elements adopted from other cultural and religious traditions present in society, particularly through migration experiences.
- articulate, together with migrant communities, the most appropriate specific pastoral approach, respecting the diversity of origin, culture, language, religious affiliation, and traditions.

- assist migrants in pursuing their right to celebrate their faith by offering them spaces and structures to conduct their religious services and to offer spiritual care.

Moreover, we encourage churches

- to be respectful toward migrants' religious and cultural identities, promoting their integral human development and assisting them to attend to their spiritual needs in a spirit of mutual dialogue and respect, avoiding at the same time misunderstandings and confusion when joint religious services or non-Christian religious services are held;
- to find appropriate ways of helping their communities to appreciate their own Christian identity and value systems based on faith in Jesus Christ while engaging in respectful and sincere dialogue with migrants of other faith traditions;
- to amplify best practices promoted by Christians such as first-stage assistance, resettlement or relocation programmes (humanitarian corridors), family reunification and integration programmes;
- to advocate together with public authorities and other actors of civilian life to elaborate and adopt durable solutions aimed at welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants, especially the most vulnerable;
- to denounce the situations where action, or lack of action, by social, economical, political, or governmental forces results in failure to address injustice toward migrants and to uphold their basic rights;
- to seek cooperation with other faith communities to provide spiritual and pastoral support for interreligious couples;
- to acknowledge and promote the right of every migrant to embrace a religion or belief in total freedom while avoiding any form of proselytism.

Responding to the challenges and opportunities of migration, we envision a future where the international community will recognize and promote solidarity, cooperation, and the equitable distribution of the earth's goods. This is essential to eliminating factors such as war, violence, and economic hardships that lead people, individually or collectively, to abandon their own natural and cultural environments. We hope and pray that in the future all

people may exercise the freedom to migrate in pursuit of better prospects or, alternatively, not to migrate and so to contribute to their country of origin.

Prayer

Merciful God, your Son born in a manger in Bethlehem was a refugee in Egypt. Just as you never abandoned your Son, so now be close to all your children in the world who are on the move in search of survival or a better life for themselves and their families. No one is a stranger to you, and no one is ever far from your loving care.

Teach us to recognize that together, as one human family, we are all migrants, journeying in hope to you, our true home, where every tear will be wiped away, where we will be at peace and safe in your warm embrace.

In your loving-kindness, watch over refugees, migrant workers, those who are trafficked, asylum seekers, unaccompanied children, and all those who have left their homes and endure fear, uncertainty, and humiliation searching for a place of safety and hope.

Protect them from any danger and bring them safely to a place of welcome. Banish fear, suspicion, and rejection from our hearts.

Give us eyes capable of seeing strangers coming to our countries not as a threat but as an opportunity for mutual growth and enrichment.

Banish selfishness from our hearts and inspire us with generosity while caring for those in need. Move us to share with them the gifts we have received from your hand, and may they share with us the gifts they bring.

Give migrants a thankful heart that they too may pursue peace and cooperate for good in their new homes. Inspire us to transform our cultures and our policies to uphold the dignity of all.

With the light of the Holy Spirit, inspire our churches to look for new forms of ecumenical cooperation in welcoming, protecting, promoting, and integrating migrants.

Strengthen our Christian fellowship as we pray, walk, and work together for a world of justice and peace for all.

This we pray to you Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, in the communion of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Tenth Report
2014–2022

The title of this report—Walking, Praying and Working Together: An Ecumenical Pilgrimage—was the motto of Pope Francis' visit to Geneva in June 2018. Undoubtedly this was the highlight of ecumenical cooperation between the WCC and the RCC during this mandate of the JWG. It accurately captured the WCC's emphasis on a pilgrimage of justice and peace following the 10th Assembly in Busan in 2013 and Pope Francis' conviction that unity can only grow through Christians walking together as fellow pilgrims in Christ's love.

We offer this report and two study documents to the 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe in 2022 with recommendations for the parent bodies. The study documents address two critical areas of ecumenical cooperation in today's world: Peace Is a Treasure for All: An Ecumenical Reflection on Peacebuilding in Situations of Conflict and Violence and Migrants and Refugees: Ecumenical Challenges and Opportunities

Together, these documents encourage intensive ecumenical cooperation of all Christians and people of goodwill, with a particular emphasis on the contributions that can be made by the WCC and the RCC together.

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